



O. Henry

Greatest Short Stories

VOLUME 3



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THE PHONOGRAPH AND THE GRAFT

BY O. HENRY

THE PHONOGRAPH AND THE GRAFT

BY O. HENRY

I LOOKED in at the engine-room of the Bloomfield-Cater Mfg. Co. (Ltd.), for the engineer was Kirksy, and there was a golden half-hour between the time he shut down steam and washed up that I coveted. For Kirksy was an improvisatore, and he told stories from the inside outward, finely leaving his spoken words and his theme to adjust themselves as best they might.

I found Kirksy resting, with his pipe lighted, smut-faced and blue overalled.

"'Tis a fair afternoon," I said, "but bids to be colder."

"Did I ever tell you," began Kirksy honorably, "about the time Henry Horsecollar and me took a phonograph to South America?" and I felt ashamed of my subterfuge, and dropped into the wooden chair he kicked toward me.

"Henry was a quarter-breed, quarter-back Cherokee, educated East in the idioms of football and West in contraband whiskey, and a gentleman, same as you or me. He was easy and

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romping in his ways; a man about six foot, with a kind of rubber-tire movement. Yes, he was a little man about five foot five, or five foot eleven. He was what you would call a medium tall man of average smallness. Henry had quit college once, and the Muscogee jail three times—once for introducing, and twice for selling, whiskey in the Territories. Henry Horsecollar never let any cigar stores come up and stand behind him. He didn't belong to that tribe of Indians.

“Henry and me met at Texarkana, and figured out this phonograph scheme. He had \$360 which came to him out of a land allotment in the reservation. I had run down from Little Rock on account of a distressful scene I had witnessed on the street there. A man stood on a box and passed around some gold watches, screw case, stem-winders, Elgin movement, very elegant. Twenty bucks they cost you over the counter. At three dollars the crowd fought for the tickers. The man happened to find a valise full of them handy, and he passed them out like putting hot biscuits on a plate. The backs were hard to unscrew, but the crowd put its ear to the case, and they ticked mollifying and agreeable. Three of those watches were genuine tickers; but the rest, they were only kickers. Hey? Why, empty cases with one of them horny black bugs that fly around electric lights in 'em. Them bugs kick off minutes and seconds industrious and beautiful. The man I was speaking of cleaned

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up \$288, and went away, because he knew that when it came time to wind watches in Little Rock an entomologist would be needed, and he wasn't one.

"So, as I say, Henry had \$360 and I had \$288. The phonograph idea was Henry's, but I took to it freely, being fond of machinery of all kinds.

" 'The Latin races,' says Henry, explaining easy in his idioms he learned at college, 'are peculiarly adapted to be victims of the phonograph. They possess the artistic temperament. They yearn for music and color and gayety. They give up wampum to the hand-organ man or the four-legged chicken when they're months behind with the grocery and the breadfruit tree.'

" 'Then,' says I, 'we'll export canned music to the Latins; but I'm mindful of Mr. Julius Cæsar's account of 'em where he says, "*Omnia Gallia in tres partes divisa est*," which is the same as to say, "We will need all of our gall in devising means to tree them parties."' I hated to make a show of education, but I was disinclined to be overdone in syntax by a mere Indian, to whom we owe nothing except the land on which the United States is situated.

"We bought a fine phonograph in Texarkana—one of the best make—and half a trunkful of records. We packed up, and took the T. and P. for New Orleans. From that celebrated centre of molasses and disfranchised coon songs we took a steamer for—yes, I think it was South

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America or Mexico—I am full of inability to divulge the location of it—'tis on the rural delivery route, 'tis colored yellow on the map, and branded with the literature of cigar boxes.

“We landed on a smiling coast at a town they denounced by the name, as near as I can recollect, of Sore-toe-kangaroo. 'Twas a palatable enough place to look at. The houses were clean and white, sticking about among the scenery like hard-boiled eggs served with lettuce. There was a block of skyscraper mountains in the suburbs, and they kept pretty quiet, like they were laying one finger on their lips and watching the town. And the sea was remarking ‘Sh-sh-sh!’ on the beach; and now and then a ripe cocoanut would fall kerblip in the sand, and that was all there was doing. Yes, I judge that town was considerably on the quiet. I judge that after Gabriel quits blowing his horn, and the car starts, with Philadelphia swinging to the last strap, and Pine Gulley, Arkansas, hanging on to the hind rail, Sore-toe-kangaroo will wake up and ask if anybody spoke.

“The captain went ashore with us, and offered to conduct what he seemed to like to call the obsequies. He introduced Henry and me to the United States Consul, and a roan man, the head of the Department of Mercenary and Licentious Dispositions, the way it read upon his sign.

“‘I touch here again a week from to-day,’ says the captain.

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“‘By that time,’ we told him, ‘we’ll be amassing wealth in the interior towns with our galvanized prima donna and correct imitations of Sousa’s band excavating a march from a tin mine.’

“‘Ye’ll not,’ says the captain. ‘Ye’ll be hypnotized. Any gentleman in the audience who kindly steps upon the stage and looks this country in the eye will be converted to the hypothesis that he’s but a fly in the Elgin creamery. Ye’ll be standing knee deep in the surf waiting for me, and your machine for making Hamburger steak out of the hitherto respected art of music will be playing “There’s no place like home.”’

“Henry skinned a twenty off his roll, and received from the Bureau of Mercenary Dispositions a paper bearing a red seal and a dialect story, and no change.

“Then we got the consul full of red wine, and struck him for a horoscope. He was a thin, youngish kind of man, I should say past fifty, sort of French-Irish in his affections, and puffed up with disconsolation. Yes, he was a flattened kind of a man, in whom drink lay stagnant, inclined to corpulence and misery. Yes, I think he was a kind of Dutchman, being very sad and genial in his ways.

“‘The marvelous invention,’ he says, ‘entitled the phonograph, has never before invaded these shores. The people have never heard it. They would not believe it if they should. Simple-

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hearted children of nature, progress has never condemned them to accept the work of a can-opener as an overture, and rag-time might incite them to a bloody revolution. But you can try the experiment. The best chance you have is that the populace may not wake up when you play. There's two ways,' says the consul, 'they may take it. They may become inebriated with attention, like an Atlanta colonel listening to "Marching through Georgia," or they will get excited and transpose the key of the music with an axe and yourselves into a dungeon. In the latter case,' says the consul, 'I'll do my duty by cabling to the State Department, and I'll wrap the Stars and Stripes around you when you come to be shot, and threaten them with the vengeance of the greatest gold export and financial reserve nation on earth. The flag is full of bullet holes now,' says the consul, 'made in that way. Twice before,' says the consul, 'I have cabled our Government for a couple of gunboats to protect American citizens. The first time the Department sent me a pair of gum boots. The other time was when a man named Pease was going to be executed here. They referred that appeal to the Secretary of Agriculture. Let us now disturb the señor behind the bar for a subsequencce of the red wine.'

"Thus soliloquized the consul of Sore-toe-kangaroo to me and Henry Horsecollar.

"But, notwithstanding, we hired a room that

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afternoon in the Calle de los Angeles, the main street that runs along the shore, and put our trunks there. 'Twas a good-sized room, dark and cheerful, but small. 'Twas on a various street, diversified by houses and conservatory plants. The peasantry of the city passed to and fro on the fine pasturage between the sidewalks. 'Twas, for the world, like an opera chorus when the Royal Kafoozlum is about to enter.

"We were rubbing the dust off the machine and getting fixed to start business the next day when a big, fine-looking white man in white clothes stopped at the door and looked in. We extended the invitations, and he walked inside and sized us up. He was chewing a long cigar, and wrinkling his eyes, meditative, like a girl trying to decide which dress to wear to the party.

" 'New York?' he says to me finally.

" 'Originally, and from time to time,' I says, 'Hasn't it rubbed off yet?'

" 'It's simple,' says he, 'when you know how. It's the fit of the vest. They don't cut vests right anywhere else. Coats, maybe, but not vests.'

"The white man looks at Henry Horsecollar and hesitates.

" 'Injun,' says Henry; 'tame Injun.'

" 'Mellinger,' says the man—'Homer P. Mellinger. Boys, you're confiscated. You're babes in the wood without a chaperon or referee, and it's my duty to start you going. I'll knock out the

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props and launch you proper in the pellucid waters of Sore-toe-kangaroo. You'll have to be christened, and if you'll come with me I'll break a bottle of wine across your bows, according to Hoyle.'

"Well, for two days Homer P. Mellinger did the honors. That man cut ice in Sore-toe-kangaroo. He was it. He was the Royal Kafoozlum. If me and Henry was babes in the wood, he was a Robin Redbreast from the topmost bough. Him and me and Henry Horsecollar locked arms and toted that phonograph around and had wassail and diversions. Everywhere we found doors open we went in and set the machine going, and Mellinger called upon the people to observe the artful music and his lifelong friends, the two Señors Americanos. The opera chorus was agitated with esteem, and followed us from house to house. There was *vino tinto* and *vino blanco* to drink with every tune. The aborigines had acquirements of a pleasant thing in the way of drinks that gums itself to the recollection. They chop off the end of a green cocoanut, and pour in on the liquor of it French brandy and gin. We had them and other things.

"Mine and Henry's money was counterfeit. Everything was on Homer P. Mellinger. That man could find rolls of bills in his clothes where Hermann the Wizard couldn't have conjured out an omelette. He could have founded universities and had enough left to buy the colored vote

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of his country. Henry and me wondered what his graft was. One evening he told us.

“‘Boys,’ says he, ‘I’ve deceived you. Instead of a painted butterfly, I’m the hardest worked man in this country. Ten years ago I landed on its shores, and two years ago on the point of its jaw. Yes, I reckon I can get the decision over this ginger-cake commonwealth at the end of any round I choose. I’ll confide in you because you are my countrymen and guests, even if you have committed an assault upon my adopted shores with the worst system of noises ever set to music.

“‘My job is private secretary to the President of this Republic, and my duties are running it. I’m not headlined in the bills, but I’m the mustard in the salad dressing. There isn’t a law goes before Congress, there isn’t a concession granted, there isn’t an import duty levied, but what H. P. Mellinger he cooks and seasons it. In the front office I fill the President’s inkstand and search visiting statesmen for dynamite; in the back room I dictate the policy of the government. You’d never guess how I got the pull. It’s the only graft of its kind in the world. I’ll put you wise. You remember the topline in the old copy-books—“Honesty is the best policy.” That’s it. I’m the only honest man in this republic. The government knows it; the people know it; the boodlers know it; the foreign investors know it. I make the government keep its faith. If a man is promised a job he gets it.

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If outside capital buys a concession they get the goods. I run a monopoly of square dealing here. There's no competition. If Colonel Diogenes were to flash his lantern in this precinct he'd have my address inside of two minutes. There isn't big money in it, but it's a sure thing, and lets a man sleep of nights.'

"Thus Homer P. Mellinger made oration to me and Henry Horsecollar in Sore-toe-kan-garoo. And, later, he divested himself of this remark:

" 'Boys, I'm to hold a *soirée* this evening with a gang of leading citizens, and I want your assistance. You bring the musical corn sheller and give the affair the outside appearance of a function. There's important business on hand, but it mustn't show. I can talk to you people. I've been pained for years on account of not having anybody to blow off and brag to. I get homesick sometimes, and I'd swap the entire perquisites of office for just one hour to have a stein and a caviare sandwich somewhere on Thirty-fourth Street, and stand and watch the street cars go by, and smell the peanut roaster at old Giuseppe's fruit stand.'

" 'Yes,' said I, 'there's fine caviare at Billy Renfrow's café, corner of Thirty-fourth and—'

" 'God knows it,' interrupts Mellinger, 'and if you'd told me you knew Billy Renfrow I'd have invented tons of ways of making you happy. Billy was my side kicker in New York. That

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is a man who never knew what crooked was. Here I am working Honesty for a graft, but that man loses money on it. *Carrambos!* I get sick at times of this country. Everything's rotten. From the Executive down to the coffee pickers, they're plotting to down each other and skin their friends. If a mule driver takes off his hat to an official, that man figures it out that he's a popular idol, and sets his pegs to stir up a revolution and upset the administration. It's one of my little chores as private secretary to smell out these revolutions and affix the kibosh before they break out and scratch the paint off the government property. That's why I'm down here now in this mildewed coast town. The Governor of the district and his crew are plotting to uprising. I've got every one of their names, and they're invited to listen to the phonograph tonight, compliments of H. P. M. That's the way I'll get them in a bunch, and things are on the programme to happen to them.'

"We three were sitting at table in the cantina of the Purified Saints. Mellinger poured out wine, and was looking some worried; I was thinking.

" 'They're a sharp crowd,' he says, kind of fretful. 'They're capitalized by a foreign syndicate after rubber, and they're loaded to the muzzle for bribing. I'm sick,' goes on Mellinger, 'of comic opera. I want to smell East River and wear suspenders again. At times I feel like

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throwing up my job, but I'm d—n fool enough to be sort of proud of it. "There's Mellinger," they say here, "*Por Dios!* you can't touch him with a million." I'd like to take that record back and show it to Billy Renfrow some day; and that tightens my grip whenever I see a fat thing that I could corral just by winking one eye—and losing my graft. By ——! they can't monkey with me. They know it. What money I get I make honest and spend it. Some day I'll make a pile and go back and eat caviare with Billy. To-night I'll show you how to handle a bunch of corruptionists. I'll show them what Mellinger, private secretary, means when you spell it with the cotton and tissue paper off.'

"Mellinger appears shaky, and breaks his glass against the neck of the bottle.

"I says to myself, 'White man, if I'm not mistaken there's been a bait laid out where the tail of your eye could see it.'

"That night, according to arrangements, me and Henry took the phonograph to a room in a 'dobe house in a dirty side street, where the grass was knee high. 'Twas a long room, lighted with smoky oil lamps. There was plenty of chairs and a table at the back end. We set the phonograph on the table. Mellinger was there, walking up and down disturbed in his predicaments. He chewed cigars and spat 'em out, and he bit the thumb nail of his left hand.

"By and by the invitations to the musicale

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came sliding in by pairs and threes and spade flushes. Their color was of a diversity, running from a three-days' smoked meerschaum to a patent-leather polish. They were as polite as wax, being devastated with enjoyments to give Señor Mellinger the good evenings. I understood their Spanish talk—I ran a pumping engine two years in a Mexican silver mine, and had it pat—but I never let on.

"Maybe fifty of 'em had come, and was seated, when in slid the king bee, the Governor of the district. Mellinger met him at the door and escorted him to the grand stand. When I saw that Latin man I knew that Mellinger, private secretary, had all the dances on his card taken. That was a big, squashy man the color of a rubber overshoe, and he had an eye like a head waiter's.

"Mellinger explained, fluent, in the Castilian idioms, that his soul was disconcerted with joy at introducing to his respected friends America's greatest invention, the wonder of the age. Henry got the cue and run on an elegant brass-band record and the festivities became initiated. The Governor man had a bit of English under his hat, and when the music was choked off he says:

"'Ver-r-ree fine. Gr-r-r-r-racias, the American gentlemen, the so esplendeed moosic as to playee.'

"The table was a long one, and Henry and me sat at the end of it next the wall. The Governor

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sat at the other end. Homer P. Mellinger stood at the side of it. I was just wondering how Mellinger was going to handle his crowd, when the home talent suddenly opened the services.

"That Governor man was suitable for uprisings and policies. I judge he was a ready kind of man, who took his own time. Yes, he was full of attentions and immediateness. He leaned his hands on the table and imposed his face toward the secretary man.

" 'Do the American Señors understand Spanish?' he asks in his native accents.

" 'They do not,' says Mellinger.

" 'Then, listen,' goes on the Latin man, prompt. 'The musics are of sufficient prettiness, but not of necessity. Let us speak of business. I well know why we are here, since I observe my compatriots. You had a whisper yesterday, Señor Mellinger, of our proposals. To-night we will speak out. We know that you stand in the President's favor, and we know your influence. The government will be changed. We know the worth of your services. We esteem your friendship and aid so much that'—Mellinger raises his hand, but the Governor man bottles him up. 'Do not speak until I have done.'

"The Governor man then draws a package wrapped in paper from his pocket, and lays it on the table by Mellinger's hand.

" 'In that you will find one hundred thousand dollars in money of your country. You can do

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nothing against us, but you can be worth that for us. Go back to the capital and obey our instructions. Take that money now. We trust you. You will find with it a paper giving in detail the work you will be expected to do for us. Do not have the unwiseness to refuse.'

"The Governor man paused, with his eyes fixed on Mellinger, full of expressions and observances. I looked at Mellinger, and was glad Billy Renfrow couldn't see him then. The sweat was popping out on his forehead, and he stood dumb, tapping the little package with the ends of his fingers. The Colorado maduro gang was after his graft. He had only to change his politics, and stuff six figures in his inside pocket.

"Henry whispers to me and wants the pause in the programme interpreted. I whisper back: 'H. P. is up against a bribe, senator's size, and the coons have got him going.' I saw Mellinger's hand moving closer to the package. 'He's weakening,' I whispered to Henry. 'We'll remind him,' says Henry, 'of the peanut roaster on Thirty-fourth Street, New York.'

"Henry stooped and got a record from the basketful we'd brought, slid it in the phonograph, and started her off. It was a cornet solo, very neat and beautiful, and the name of it was 'Home, Sweet Home.' Not one of them fifty odd men in the room moved while it was playing, and the Governor man kept his eyes steady on Mellinger. I saw Mellinger's head go up little

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by little, and his hand came creeping away from the package. Not until the last note sounded did anybody stir. And then Homer P. Mellinger takes up the bundle of boodle and slams it in the Governor man's face.

"‘That's my answer,’ says Mellinger, private secretary, ‘and there'll be another in the morning. I have proofs of conspiracy against every man of you. The show is over, gentlemen.’

"‘There's one more act,’ puts in the Governor man. ‘You are a servant, I believe, employed by the President to copy letters and answer raps at the door. I am Governor here. Señors, I call upon you in the name of the cause to seize this man.’

"That brindled gang of conspirators shoved back their chairs and advanced in force. I could see where Mellinger had made a mistake in massing his enemy so as to make a grand-stand play. I think he made another one, too; but we can pass that, Mellinger's idea of a graft and mine being different, according to estimations and points of view.

"There was only one window and door in that room, and they were in the front end. Here was fifty odd Latin men coming in a bunch to obstruct the legislation of Mellinger. You may say there were three of us, for me and Henry, simultaneous, declared New York City and the Cherokee Nation in sympathy with the weaker party.

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"Then it was that Henry Horsecollar rose to a point of disorder and intervened, showing, admirable, the advantages of education as applied to the American Indian's natural intellect and native refinement. He stood up and smoothed back his hair on each side with his hands as you have seen little girls do when they play.

" 'Get behind me, both of you,' says Henry.

" 'What is it to be?' I asked.

" 'I'm going to buck centre,' says Henry, in his football idioms. 'There isn't a tackle in the lot of them. Keep close behind me and rush the game.'

"That cultured Red Man exhaled an arrangement of sounds with his mouth that caused the Latin aggregation to pause, with thoughtfulness and hesitations. The matter of his proclamation seemed to be a co-operation of the Cherokee college yell with the Carlisle war-whoop. He went at the chocolate team like the flip of a little boy's nigger shooter. His right elbow laid out the Governor man on the gridiron, and he made a lane the length of the crowd that a woman could have carried a step-ladder through without striking anything. All me and Mellinger had to do was to follow.

"In five minutes we were out of that street and at the military headquarters, where Mellinger had things his own way.

"The next day Mellinger takes me and Henry to one side and begins to shed tens and twenties.

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“ ‘I want to buy that phonograph,’ he says. ‘I liked that last tune it played. Now, you boys better go back home, for they’ll give you trouble here before I get the screws put on ’em. If you happen to ever see Billy Renfrow again, tell him I’m coming back to New York as soon as I can make a stake—honest.’

“ ‘This is more money,’ says I, ‘than the machine is worth.’

“ ‘ ’Tis government expense money,’ says Mellinger, ‘and the government’s getting the tune grinder cheap.’

“ ‘Henry and I knew that pretty well, but we never let Homer P. Mellinger know that we had seen how near he came to losing his graft.

“ ‘We laid low until the day the steamer came back. When we saw the captain’s boat on the beach me and Henry went down and stood in the edge of the water. The captain grinned when he saw us.

“ ‘I told you you’d be waiting,’ he says. ‘Where’s the Hamburger machine?’

“ ‘It stays behind,’ I says, ‘to play “Home, Sweet Home.” ’

“ ‘I told you so,’ says the captain again. ‘Climb in the boat.’

“ ‘And that,” said Kirksy, “is the way me and Henry Horsecollar introduced the phonograph in that Latin country along about the vicinity of South America.”

BROTHER RABBIT'S CRADLE

BY JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS

BROTHER RABBIT'S CRADLE

BY JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS

“**I** WISH you’d tell me what you tote a hankcher fer,” remarked Uncle Remus, after he had reflected over the matter a little while.

“Why, to keep my mouth clean,” answered the little boy. Uncle Remus looked at the lad, and shook his head doubtfully. “Uh-uh!” he exclaimed. “You can’t fool folks when dey git ez ol’ ez what I is. I been watchin’ you now mo’ days dan I kin count, an’ I ain’t never see yo’ mouf dirty ’nuff fer ter be wiped wid a hankcher. It’s allers clean—too clean fer ter suit me. Dar’s yo’ pa, now; when he wuz a little chap like you, his mouf useter git dirty in de mornin’ an’ stay dirty plum twel night. Dey wa’n’t sca’cely a day dat he didn’t look like he been playin’ wid de pigs in de stable lot. Ef he yever is tote a hankcher, he ain’t never show it ter me.”

“He carries one now,” remarked the little boy with something like a triumphant look on his face.

“Tooby sho’,” said Uncle Remus; “tooby sho’ he do. He start ter totin’ one when he tuck an’ tuck a notion fer ter go a-courtin’. It had his name in one cornder, an’ he useter sprinkle it wid stuff out’n a pepper-sauce bottle. It sho’

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wuz rank, dat stuff wuz; it smell so sweet it make you fergit whar you live at. I take notice dat you ain't got none on yone."

"No; mother says that cologne or any kind of perfumery on your handkerchief makes you common."

Uncle Remus leaned his head back, closed his eyes, and permitted a heartrending groan to issue from his lips. The little boy showed enough anxiety to ask him what the matter was. "Nothin' much, honey; I wuz des tryin' fer ter count how many diffunt kinder people dey is in dis big worl', an' 'fo' I got mo' dan half done wid my countin', a pain struck me in my mizry, an' I had ter break off."

"I know what you mean," said the child. "You think mother is queer; grandmother thinks so too."

"How come you to be so wise, honey?" Uncle Remus inquired, opening his eyes wide with astonishment.

"I know by the way you talk, and by the way grandmother looks sometimes," answered the little boy.

Uncle Remus said nothing for some time. When he did speak, it was to lead the little boy to believe that he had been all the time engaged in thinking about something else. "Talkin' er dirty folks," he said, "you oughter seed yo' pa when he wuz a little bit er chap. Dey wuz long days when you couldn't tell ef he wuz black er

BROTHER RABBIT'S CRADLE

white, he wuz dat dirty. He'd come out'n de big house in de mornin' ez clean ez a new pin, an' 'fo' ten er-clock you couldn't tell what kinder clof his cloze wuz made out'n. Many's de day when I've seed ol' Miss—dat's yo' great-gran'-mammy—comb 'nuff trash out'n his head fer ter fill a basket."

The little boy laughed at the picture that Uncle Remus drew of his father. "He's very clean, now," said the lad loyally.

"Maybe he is an' maybe he ain't," remarked Uncle Remus, suggesting a doubt. "Dat's needer here ner dar. Is he any better off clean dan what he wuz when you couldn't put yo' han's on 'im widout havin' ter go an' wash um? Yo' gran'mammy useter call 'im a pig, an' clean ez he may be now, I take notice dat he makes mo' complaint er headache an' de heartburn dan what he done when he wuz runnin' roun' here half-naked an' full er mud. I hear tell dat some nights he can't git no sleep, but when he wuz little like you—no, suh, I'll not say dat, bekaze he wuz bigger dan what you is fum de time he kin toddle roun' widout nobody he'pin' him; but when he wuz ol' ez you an' twice ez big, dey ain't narry night dat he can't sleep—an' not only all night, but half de day ef dey'd 'a' let 'im. Ef dey'd let you run roun' here like he done, an' git dirty, you'd git big an' strong 'fo' you know it. Dey ain't nothin' mo' wholesomer dan a peck er two er clean dirt on a little chap like you."

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There is no telling what comment the child would have made on this sincere tribute to clean dirt, for his attention was suddenly attracted to something that was gradually taking shape in the hands of Uncle Remus. At first it seemed to be hardly worthy of notice, for it had been only a thin piece of board. But now the one piece had become four pieces, two long and two short, and under the deft manipulations of Uncle Remus it soon assumed a boxlike shape.

The old man had reached the point in his work where silence was necessary to enable him to do it full justice. As he fitted the thin boards together, a whistling sound issued from his lips, as though he were letting off steam; but the singular noise was due to the fact that he was completely absorbed in his work. He continued to fit and trim, and trim and fit, until finally the little boy could no longer restrain his curiosity. "Uncle Remus, what are you making?" he asked plaintively.

"Larroes fer ter kech meddlers," was the prompt and blunt reply.

"Well, what are larroes to catch meddlers?" the child insisted.

"Nothin' much an' sump'n mo'. Dicky, Dicky, killt a chicky, an' fried it quicky, in de oven, like a sloven. Den ter his daddy's Sunday hat, he tuck 'n' hitched de ol' black cat. Now what you reckon make him do dat? Ef you can't tell me word fer word an' spellin' fer

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spellin' we'll go out an' come in an' take a walk."

He rose, grunting as he did so, thus paying an unintentional tribute to the efficacy of age as the partner of rheumatic aches and stiff joints. "You hear me gruntin'," he remarked—"well, dat's bekaze I ain't de chicky fried by Dicky, which he e't 'nuff fer ter make 'im sicky." As he went out the child took his hand, and went trotting along by his side, thus affording an interesting study for those who concern themselves with the extremes of life. Hand in hand the two went out into the fields, and thence into the great woods, where Uncle Remus, after searching about for some time, carefully deposited his oblong box, remarking: "Ef I don't make no mistakes, dis ain't so mighty fur fum de place whar de creeturs has der playgroun', an' dey ain't no tellin' but what one un um'll creep in dar when deyer playin' hidin', an' ef he do, he'll sho be our meat."

"Oh, it's a trap!" exclaimed the little boy, his face lighting up with enthusiasm.

"An' dey wa'n't nobody here fer ter tell you," Uncle Remus declared, astonishment in his tone. "Well, ef dat don't bang my time, I ain't no free nigger. Now, ef dat had 'a' been yo' pa at de same age, I'd 'a' had ter tell 'im forty-lev'm times, an' den he wouldn't 'a' b'lieved me twel he see sump'n in dar tryin' fer ter git out. Den he'd say it wuz a trap, but not befo'. I ain't

blamin' 'im," Uncle Remus went on, "kaze 'tain't eve'y chap dat kin tell a trap time he see it, an' mo' dan dat, traps don' allers sketch what dey er sot fer."

He paused, looked all around, and up in the sky, where fleecy clouds were floating lazily along, and in the tops of the trees, where the foliage was swaying gently in the breeze. Then he looked at the little boy. "Ef I ain't gone an' got los'," he said, "we ain't so mighty fur fum de place whar Mr. Man, once 'pon a time—not yo' time ner yit my time, but some time—tuck'n' sot a trap for Brer Rabbit. In dem days, dey hadn't l'arnt how ter be kyarpenters, an' dish yer trap what I'm tellin' you 'bout wuz a great big contraption. Big ez Brer Rabbit wuz, it wuz lots too big fer him.

"Now, whiles Mr. Man wuz fixin' up dis trap, Mr. Rabbit wa'n't so mighty fur off. He hear de saw—er-rash! er-rash!—an' he hear de hammer—bang, bang, bang!—an' he ax hisse'f what all dis racket wuz 'bout. He see Mr. Man come out'n his yard totin' sump'n, an' he got furder off; he see Mr. Man comin' todes de bushes, an' he tuck ter de woods; he see 'im comin' todes de woods, an' he tuck ter de bushes. Mr. Man tote de trap so fur an' no furder. He put it down, he did, an' Brer Rabbit watch 'im; he put in de bait, an' Brer Rabbit watch 'im; he fix de trigger, an' still Brer Rabbit watch 'im. Mr. Man look at de trap an' it satchify him. He look at it an'

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laugh, an' when he do dat, Brer Rabbit wunk one eye, an' wiggle his mustache, an' chaw his cud.

"An' dat ain't all he do, needer. He sot out in de bushes, he did, an' study how ter git some game in de trap. He study so hard, an' he got so erryated, dat he thumped his behime foot on de groun' twel it soun' like a cow dancin' out dar in de bushes, but 'twan't no cow, ner yit no calf—'twuz des Brer Rabbit studyin'. Atter so long a time, he put out down de road todes dat part er de country whar mos' er de creeturs live at. Eve'y time he hear a fuss, he'd dodge in de bushes, kaze he wanter see who comin'. He keep on an' he keep on, an' bimeby he hear ol' Brer Wolf trottin' down de road.

"It so happen dat Brer Wolf wuz de ve'y one what Brer Rabbit wanter see. Dey wuz perlit ter one an'er, but dey wan't no frien'ly feelin' 'twix um. Well, here come ol' Brer Wolf, hongrier dan a chicken-hawk on a frosty mornin', an' ez he come up he see Brer Rabbit set by de side er de road lookin' like he done lose all his family an' his friends terboot.

"Dey pass de time er day, an' den Brer Wolf kinder grin an' say, 'Laws-a-massy, Brer Rabbit! what ail you? You look like you done had a spell er fever an' ague; what de trouble?' 'Trouble, Brer Wolf? You ain't never see no trouble twel you git whar I'm at. Maybe you wouldn't min' it like I does, kaze I ain't usen ter it. But

I boun' you done seed me light-minded fer de las' time. I'm done—I'm plum wo' out,' sez Brer Rabbit, sezee. Dis make Brer Wolf open his eyes wide. He say, 'Dis de fus' time I ever is here you talk dat-a-way, Brer Rabbit; take yo' time an' tell me 'bout it. I ain't had my brekkus yit, but dat don't make no diffunce, long ez youer in trouble. I'll he'p you out ef I kin, an' mo' dan dat, I'll put some heart in de work.' When he say dis, he grin an' show his tushes, an' Brer Rabbit kinder edge 'way fum 'im. He say, 'Tell me de trouble, Brer Rabbit, an' I'll do my level bes' fer ter he'p you out.'

"Wid dat, Brer Rabbit 'low dat Mr. Man done been had 'im hired fer ter take keer er his truck patch, an' keep out de minks, de mush-rats an' de weasels. He say dat he done so well settin' up night atter night, when he des might ez well been in bed, dat Mr. Man prommus 'im sump'n extry 'sides de mess er greens what he gun 'im eve'y day. Atter so long a time, he say, Mr. Man 'low dat he gwineter make 'im a present uv a cradle so he kin rock de little Rabs ter sleep when dey cry. So said, so done, he say. Mr. Man make de cradle an' tell Brer Rabbit he kin take it home wid 'im.

"He start out wid it, he say, but it got so heavy he hatter set it down in de woods, an' dat's de reason why Brer Wolf seed 'im settin' down by de side er de road, lookin' like he in deep trouble. Brer Wolf sot down, he did, an' study, an' bime-

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by he say he'd like mighty well fer ter have a cradle fer his chillun, long ez cradles wuz de style. Brer Rabbit say dey been de style fer de longest, an' ez fer Brer Wolf wantin' one, he say he kin have de one what Mr. Man make fer him, kaze it's lots too big fer his chillun. 'You know how folks is,' sez Brer Rabbit, sezee. 'Dey try ter do what dey dunner how ter do, an' dar's der house bigger dan a barn, an' dar's de fence wid mo' holes in it dan what dey is in a saine, an' kaze dey have great big chillun dey got de idee dat eve'y cradle what dey make mus' fit der own chillun. An' dat's how come I can't tote de cradle what Mr. Man make fer me mo' dan ten steps at a time.'

"Brer Wolf ax Brer Rabbit what he gwineter do fer a cradle, an' Brer Rabbit 'low he kin manage fer ter git 'long wid de ol' one twel he kin 'suade Mr. Man ter make 'im an'er one, an' he don't speck dat'll be so mighty hard ter do. Brer Wolf can't he'p but b'lieve dey's some trick in it, an' he say he ain't see de ol' cradle when las' he wuz at Brer Rabbit house. Wid dat, Brer Rabbit bust out laughin'. He say, 'Dat's been so long back, Brer Wolf, dat I done fergit all 'bout it; 'sides dat, ef dey wuz a cradle dar, I boun' you my ol' 'oman got better sense dan ter set de cradle in der parler, whar comp'ny comes'; an' he laugh so loud an' long dat he make Brer Wolf right shame er himse'f.

"He 'low, ol' Brer Wolf did, 'Come on, Brer

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Rabbit, an' show me whar de cradle is. Ef it's too big fer yo' chillun, it'll des 'bout fit mine.' An' so off dey ent ter whar Mr. Man done sot his trap. 'Twa'n't so mighty long 'fo' dey got whar dey wuz gwine, an' Brer Rabbit say, 'Brer Wolf, dar yo' cradle, an' may it do you mo' good dan it's yever done me!' Brer Wolf walk all roun' de trap an' look at it like 'twuz live. Brer Rabbit thump one er his behime foots on de groun' an' Brer Wolf jump like some un done shot a gun right at 'im. Dis make Brer Rabbit laugh twel he can't laugh no mo'. Brer Wolf, he say he kinder nervous 'bout dat time er de year, an' de leas' little bit er noise'll make 'im jump. He ax how he gwineter git any purchis on de cradle, an' Brer Rabbit say he'll hatter git inside an' walk wid it on his back, kaze dat de way he done done.

"Brer Wolf ax what all dem contraptions on de inside is, an' Brer Rabbit 'spon' dat dey er de rockers, an' dey ain't no needs fer ter be skeer'd un um, kaze dey ain't nothin' but plain wood. Brer Wolf say he ain't 'zactly skeer'd, but he done got ter de p'int whar he know dat you better look 'fo' you jump. Brer Rabbit 'low dat ef dey's any jumpin' fer ter be done, he de one ter do it, an' he talk like he done fergit what dey come fer. Brer Wolf, he fool an' fumble roun', but bimeby he walk in de cradle, sprung de trigger, an' dar he wuz! Brer Rabbit, he holler out, 'Come on, Brer Wolf; des hump yo'se'f, an'

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I'll be wid you.' But try ez he will an' grunt ez he may, Brer Wolf can't budge dat trap. Bime-by Brer Rabbit git tired er waitin', an' he say dat ef Brer Wolf ain't gwineter come on he's gwine home. He 'low dat a frien' what say he gwineter he'p you, an' den go in a cradle an' drap off ter sleep, dat's all he wanter know 'bout um; an' wid dat he made fer de bushes, an' he wa'n't a minnit too soon, kaze here come Mr. Man fer ter see ef his trap had been sprung. He look, he did, an', sho 'nuff, it 'uz sprung, an' dey wuz sump'n in dar, too, kaze he kin hear it rustlin' roun' an' kickin' fer ter git out.

"Mr. Man look thoo de crack, an' he see Brer Wolf, which he wuz so skeer'd twel his eye look right green. Mr. Man say, 'Aha! I got you, is I? Brer Wolf say, 'Who?' Mr. Man laugh twel he can't sca'cely talk, an' still Brer Wolf say, 'Who? Who you think you got?' Mr. Man 'low, 'I don't think, I knows. Youer ol' Brer Rabbit, dat's who you is.' Brer Wolf say, 'Turn me outer here, an' I'll show you who I is.' Mr. Man laugh fit ter kill. He 'low, 'You neenter change yo' voice; I'd know you ef I met you in de dark. Youer Brer Rabbit, dat's who you is.' Brer Wolf say, 'I ain't not; dat's what I'm not!'

"Mr. Man look thoo de crack ag'in, an' he see de short years. He 'low, 'You done cut off yo' long years, but still I knows you. Oh, yes! an' you done sharpen yo' mouf an' put smut on it—

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but you can't fool me.' Brer Wolf say, 'Nobody ain't tryin' fer ter fool you. Look at my fine long bushy tail.' Mr. Man 'low, 'You done tied an'er tail on behime you, but you can't fool me. Oh, no, Brer Rabbit! You can't fool me.' Brer Wolf say, 'Look at de ha'r on my back; do dat look like Brer Rabbit?' Mr. Man 'low, 'You done wallered in de red san', but you can't fool me.'

"Brer Wolf say, 'Look at my long black legs; do dey look like Brer Rabbit?' Mr. Man 'low, 'You kin put an'er j'int in yo legs, an' you kin smut um, but you can't fool me.' Brer Wolf say, 'Look at my tushes; does dey look like Brer Rabbit?' Mr. Man 'low, 'You done got new toofies, but you can't fool me.' Brer Wolf say, 'Look at my little eyes; does dey look like Brer Rabbit?' Mr. Man 'low, 'You kin squinch yo' eye-balls, but you can't fool me, Brer Rabbit.' Brer Wolf squall out, 'I ain't not Brer Rabbit, an' yo' better turn me out er dis place so I kin take hide an' ha'r off'n Brer Rabbit.' Mr. Man say, 'Ef bofe hide an' ha'r wuz off, I'd know you, kaze 'tain't in you fer ter fool me.' An' it hurt Brer Wolf feelin's so bad fer Mr. Man ter sput his word, dat he bust out inter a big boo-boo, an' dat's 'bout all I know."

"Did the man really and truly think that Brother Wolf was Brother Rabbit?" asked the little boy.

"When you pin me down dat-a-way," re-

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sponded Uncle Remus, "I'm bleeze ter tell you dat I ain't too certain an' sho' 'bout dat. De tale come down fum my great-gran'daddy's great-gran'daddy; it come on down ter my daddy, an' des ez he gun it ter me, des dat-a-way I done gun it ter you."

AFTER THE BATTLE

BY JOSEPH A. ALTSHELER

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THE falling dusk quenched the fury of the battle. The cannon glimmered but feebly on the dim horizon like the sputter of a dying fire. The shouts of combatants were unheard, and Dave Joyce concluded that the fighting was over for that day at least. In his soul he was glad of it.

"Pardner," he said to the wounded man, "the battle has passed on an' left us here like a canoe stuck on a sand bank. I think the fightin' is over, but if it ain't we're out of it anyhow, an' I don't know any law why we shouldn't make ourselves as comf'table as things will allow."

"If there's anythin' done," said the wounded man, "you'll have to do it, for I can't walk, an' I can't move, except when there's a bush for me to grab hold of and pull myself along by."

"That's mighty bad," said Joyce, sympathetically. "Where did you say that bullet took you?"

"I got it in my right leg here," the other replied, "an' I think it broke the bone. Leastways the leg ain't any more use to me than if it

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was dead, though it hurts like tarnation sometimes. I guess it'll be weeks before I walk again."

"Maybe I could do somethin' for you," said Joyce, "if there was a little more light. I guess I'll take a look, anyhow. I haven't been two years in the army not to know anythin' about bullet wounds."

He bent down and with his pocket-knife cut away a patch of the faded blue cloth from the wounded man's leg.

"I guess I'd better not fool with that," he said, looking critically at the wound. "The bullet's gone all the way through, but the blood's clotted up so thick over the places that the bleedin' has stopped. You won't die if you don't move too much an' start that wound to bleedin' again."

"That's consolin'," said the wounded man; "but, since I can't move, I don't know what's to become of me but to lay here on the field an' die anyway."

"Don't you fret," said Joyce, cheerfully. "I'll take care of you. You're Fed. and I'm Confed., but you're hurt an' I ain't, an' if the case was the other way I'd expect you to do as much for me. Besides, I've lost my regiment in the shuffle, and the chances are if I tried to find it again to-night I'd run right into the middle of the Yankee army, and that would mean Camp Chase for your humble servant, which is a bunk he ain't

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covetin' very bad just now. So I guess it'll be the safe as well as the right thing for me to do to stick by you. Jerusalem! listen to that! Just hear them crickets chirpin', will you!"

There was a blaze of light in the west, followed by a crash which seemed to roll around the horizon and set all the trees of the forest to trembling. When the echoes were lost beyond the hills the silence became heavy and portentous. The night was hot and sticky, and the powdery vapor that still hung over the field crept into Joyce's throat and made him cough for breath.

"Thunderation!" he said at length, still looking in the direction in which the light had blazed up. "I guess at least a dozen of the big cannon must have been fired at once then. Can't some fellows get enough fightin' in the daytime, without pluggin' away in the night-time too? Now I come of fightin' stock myself—I'm from Kentucky—but twelve hours out of the twenty-four always 'peared to me to be enough for that sort of thing. Besides, it's so infernal hot to-night, too."

"It was hotter than this for me a while ago," said the wounded man.

"So it was, so it was," said Joyce, apologetically, "an' I mustn't forget you, either. Let 'em fight over there if they want to, an' if they're big enough fools to spile a night that way when they might be restin'. What you need just now is

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water. I think there's a spring runnin' out of the side of that hill there. If you'll listen you'll hear it tricklin' away, so cool and refreshin' like. I guess it was tricklin' that same way, just as calm an' peaceful as Sunday mornin', while the battle was goin' on round here. Don't you feel as if a little water would help you mightily, pardner?"

"'Twould so," said the wounded man. "I'm burnin' up inside, an' if you'd get me a big drink of it I'd think you were mighty nigh good enough to be one of the twelve apostles."

"It's easy enough for me to do it," said Joyce. "I'll be back in a minute."

He took off his big slouch hat and walked toward the source of the trickling sound. From beneath an overhanging rock in the side of the hill near by a tiny stream of water flowed. After a fall of five feet it plunged into a little basin which it had hallowed out for itself in the rock, and formed a deep and cool little pool. Around the edge of the pool the tender green grass grew. The overflow from it wandered away in a little rill through the woods.

"Thunder, but ain't this purty?" exclaimed Joyce, forgetting that the wounded man was out of hearing. "It's just like our springhouse back in old Kentuck. I've put out butter-crocks an' milk-buckets a hundred times to cool in our pool when I was a boy. Wish I had some of them things now!"

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The stirring of peaceful memories caused Joyce to linger a little, in forgetfulness of the wounded man. It was cool in the shadow of the hill, and the gay little stream tinkled merrily in his ears. He would have liked to remain there, but he pulled himself together with an impatient jerk, filled the crown of his hat with the limpid water, and started back to the relief of the wounded man.

He followed the channel of the stream for a little way, and as he turned to step across it he noticed the increasing depth of its waters.

"It's dammed up," he muttered. "I wonder what's done that."

Then he started back shuddering and spilled half the water from his hat, for he had almost stepped on the body of a man that had fallen across the channel of the poor little rivulet, checking the flow of its waters and deepening the stream.

The body lay face downward, and Joyce could not see the wound that had caused death. But as he stooped down he saw again the broad red flash in the west, and heard the heavy crash of the cannon.

"Will them cannon always be hungry?" he muttered. "But I guess I must give this poor little stream which 'ain't done no harm to anybody the right of way again."

He stooped and pulled the body to one side. With a thankful rush and gurgle the waters of

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the recent pool sped on in their natural channel, and Joyce returned to the fountain-head to fill his hat again.

He found the wounded man waiting with patience.

"I was gone longer than I ought to have been. Did you think I had left you, pardner?" asked Joyce.

"No," said the man. "I didn't believe you'd play that kind of a trick on me."

"An' so I haven't," said Joyce, "an' for your faith in me I've brought you a hatful of the nicest an' freshest an' coolest water you ever put your lips to in all your born days. Raise your head up, there, an' drink."

The wounded man drank and drank, and then when the hat was emptied he laid his head back in the grass and sighed as if he were in heaven.

"I must say that you 'pear to like water, pardner," said Joyce.

"Like it?" said the wounded man. "Wait till you've been wounded, an' then you'll know what it is to want water. Why, till you brought it I felt as if my inside was full of hot coals an' I'd burn all up if I didn't get something mighty quick to put the fire out."

"Then I reckon I've stopped a whole conflagration," said Joyce, "an' with mighty little trouble to myself, too. But I don't wonder that you get thirsty on a night like this. Thunderation, but ain't it clammy!"

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He sat down on a fallen tree and drew his coat-sleeve across his brow. Then he held up the sleeve: it was wet with sweat. There was no wind. The night had brought no coolness. The thick and heavy atmosphere hung close to the earth and coiled around and embraced everything. Through it came the faint gunpowdery vapor that crept into the throats and nostrils of the two men.

"I wish I was at home sleepin' on the hall floor," said Joyce. "I'll bet it would be cool there."

The wounded man made no answer, but turned his face up to the sky and drew in great mouthfuls of the warm air.

"Them tarnation fools over yonder 'pear to have their dander up yet," said Joyce, pointing to the west, where the alternate flashing and rumbling showed that the battle still lingered. "I thought the battle was over long ago, but I guess it ain't. I've knowed some all-fired fools in my time, but the fellows that would keep on fightin' on a hot night like this must be the all-firedest."

Then the two lay quite still for a while, watching the uneasy rising and falling of the night battle. Had they not known so much of war, they might have persuaded themselves that the flashes they saw were flashes of heat-lightning and the rumbling but the rumbling of summer thunder. But they knew better. They knew

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it was men and not the elements that fought.

"It's mighty curious," said Joyce, "how the sand's all gone out of me for the time. To-day I felt as if I could whip the whole Yankee army all by myself. To-night I don't want to fight anythin'. I'm as peaceful in temper as a little lamb friskin' about in our old field at home. I hope that there fightin' won't come our way; at least not to-night. How are you feelin', pardner?"

"Pretty well for a wounded man," replied the other; "but I'd like to have some more water."

"Then I'm the man to get it for you," said Joyce, springing up. "An' I'm goin' to see if I can't get somethin' to eat, too, for my innards are cryin' cupboard mighty loud. There's dead men layin' aroun' here, an' there may be somethin' in their haversacks. I hate to rob the dead, but if they've got grub we need it more'n they do."

He returned with another hatful of water, which the wounded man drank eagerly, gratefully. Then he went back and searched in the grass and bushes for the fallen. Presently he came in great glee, and triumphantly held up two haversacks.

"Luck, pardner!" he exclaimed. "Great luck! Bully luck! One of these I got off a dead Fed. and t'other off a dead Confed., and both must have been boss foragers, for in one haversack

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there's a roast chicken an' in t'other there's half a b'iled ham, an' in both there's plenty of bread. I haven't had such luck before in six months. You're a Yank, pardner, and a Northerner, an' maybe you don't know much about the vanities of roast chicken an' cold b'iled ham. But it's time you did know. I've come from the field at home when I'd been plowin' all day, an' my appetite was as sharp as a razor an' as big as our barn. I'd put up old Pete, our black mule that I'd been plowin' with, an' feed him; then I'd go to the house an' kinder loosen my waist-ban', an' mother would say to me, 'Come in the kitchen, Dave; your supper's ready for you.' Say, pardner, you ought to see me then. There'd be a pitcher of cold buttermilk from the spring-house, and one dish of roast chicken, an' another of cold ham, an' all for me, too. An' say, pardner, I can taste that ham now. When you eat one piece you want another, an' then another, an' you keep on till there ain't any left on the dish, an' then you lean back in your chair an' wish that when you come to die you'd feel as happy as you do then. Pardner, I wish them times was back again."

"I wish so too," said the wounded man.

"We can't have 'em back, at least not now," said Joyce, cheerily, "but we can make believe, an' it'll be mighty good make-believe, too, for we've got the ham an' the chicken, an' we can get cold water to take the place of cold milk. I

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guess you can use your arms all right; so you can spread this ham an' chicken out on the grass, an' I'll see if I can't find a canteen to keep the water in. Say pardner, we'll have a banquet, you an' me, that's what we'll have."

The stalwart young fellow, full of boyish delight at the idea that the thought of home had suggested to him, swung off in search of the canteen. He found not one alone, but two. Then he returned clanking them together to indicate his success. As he came up he called out, in his hearty voice:

"Pardner, is the supper-table ready? Have you got the knives an' forks? You needn't min' about the napkins. I guess we can get along without 'em just this once."

"All ready," said the wounded man; "an' I guess I can keep you company at this ham an' chicken an' bread, for I'm gettin' a mighty sharp edge on my appetite too."

"So much the better," said Joyce. "There's plenty for both, an' it wouldn't be good manners for me to eat by myself."

He sat down on the grass in front of the improvised repast, and placed one canteen beside the wounded man and the other beside himself.

"Now, pardner," he said, "we'll drink to each other's health, an' then we'll charge the ham an' chicken with more vim than either of us ever charged a breastwork."

They drank from the canteens; and then they

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made onslaught upon the provisions. Joyce ate for a while in deep and silent content, forgetting the heat and the battle which still lowered in the west. But presently, when his appetite was dulled, he remembered the cannonade.

"There they go again!" he said. "Boom! Boom! Boom! Won't them fellows ever get enough? I thought I was hungry, but the cannon over there 'pear to be hungrier. I suppose there ain't men enough in all this country to stop up their iron throats. But bang away! They don't bother us, do they, pardner? They can't spile this supper, for all their boomin' an' flashin'."

The wounded man bowed assent and took another piece of the ham.

Joyce leaned back on the grass, held up a chicken leg in his hand, and looked contemplatively at it.

"Ain't it funny, pardner," he said, "that you, a Tommy Yank, an' me, a Johnny Reb, are sittin' here, eatin' grub together, as friendly as two brothers, when we ought to be killin' each other? I don't know what Jeff Davis an' old Abe Lincoln will say about it when they hear of the way you an' me are doin'."

The wounded man laughed.

"You can say that I was your prisoner," he said, "when they summon you before the court-martial. An' so I am, if you choose to make me. I can't resist."

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"I'm thinkin' more about gettin' back safe to our army than makin' prisoners," said Joyce, as he flung the chicken bone, now bare, into the bushes.

"That may be hard to do," said the wounded man; "for neither you nor me can tell which way the armies will go. Listen to that boomin'! Wasn't it louder than before? That fightin' must be movin' round nearer to us."

"Let it move," said Joyce. "I tell you I've had enough of fightin' for one day. That battle can take care of itself. I won't let it bother me. I don't want to shoot anybody."

"Is that the way you feel when you go into battle?" asked the wounded man.

"I can't say exactly," replied Joyce. "Of course when I go out in a charge with my regiment I want to beat the other fellows, but I don't hate 'em, no, not a bit. I've got nothin' against the Yanks. I've knowed some of 'em that was mighty good fellows. There ain't any of 'em that I want to kill. No, I'll take that back; there is one, just one, a bloody villain that I'd like to draw a bead on an' send a bullet through his skulkin' body."

"Who is that?" asked the wounded man; "an' why do you make an exception of him?"

Joyce remained silent for a moment or two and drew a long blade of grass restlessly through his fingers.

"It's not a pleasant story," he said at last, "an'

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it hurts me now to tell it, but I made you ask the question, an' I guess I might as well tell you, 'cause I feel friendly toward you, pardner, bein' as we are together in distress, like two Robinson Crusoes, so to speak."

The wounded man settled himself in the grass like one who is going to listen comfortably to a story.

"It's just a yarn of the Kentuck hills," said Joyce, "an' a bad enough one, too. We're a good sort of people up there, but we're hot-blooded, an' when we get into trouble, as we sometimes do, kinfolks stan' together. I guess you're from Maine, or York State, or somewhere away up North, an' you can't understand us. But it's just as I say. Sometimes two men up in our hills fight, an' one kills the other. Then the dead man's brothers, an' sons if he's got any old enough, an' cousins, an' so on, take up their guns an' go huntin' for the man that killed him. An' the livin' man's brothers an' sons an' cousins an' so on take up their guns an come out to help him. An' there you've got your feud, an' there's no tellin' how many years it'll run on, an' how many people will get killed in it.—Thunderation, but wasn't them cannon loud that time! The battle is movin' round toward us sure!"

Joyce listened a moment, but heard nothing more except the echoes.

"Our family got into one of them feuds," he said. "It was the Joyces and the Ryders. I'm

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Dave Joyce, the son of Henry Joyce. I don't remember how the feud started; about nothin' much, I guess; but it was a red-hot one, I can tell you, pardner. It was fought fair for a long time, but at last Bill Ryder shot father from ambush and killed him. Father hadn't had much to do with the feud, either; he didn't like that sort of thing—didn't think it was right. I said right then that if I ever found the chance when I got big enough I'd kill Bill Ryder."

"Did you get the chance?" asked the wounded man.

"No," replied Joyce. "Country got too hot for Ryder, and he went away. He came back after a while, an' I was big enough to go gunnin' for him then, but the war broke out, an' off he went into the Union army before I could get a chance to draw a bead on him. I ain't heard of him since. Maybe he's been killed in battle an' his bones are bleachin' somewhere in the woods."

"Most likely," said the wounded man.

"There's no tellin'," said Joyce. "Still, some day when we're comin' up against the Yanks face to face I may see him before me, an' then I'll hold my gun steady an' shoot straight at him, instead of whoopin' like mad an' firin' lickety-split into the crowd, aimin' at nothin', as I generally do."

"It's a sad story, very sad for you," said the wounded man.

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"Yes," said Joyce. "You don't have such things as feuds up North, do you?"

"No," replied the other, "an' we're well off without 'em. Hark, there's the cannon again!"

"Yes, an' they keep creepin' round toward us with their infernal racket," said Joyce. "Cannon love to chaw up people an' then brag about it. But if them fellows are bent on fightin' all night I guess we'll have to give 'em room for it. What do you say to movin'? I've eat all I want, an' I guess you have too, an' we can take what's left with us."

"I don't know," said the wounded man. "My leg's painin' me a good deal, an' the grass is soft an' long here where I'm layin'. It makes a good bed, an' maybe I'd better stay where I am."

"I think not," said Joyce, decidedly. "That night fight's still swingin' down on us, an' if we stay too long them cannon'll feed on us too. We'd better move, pardner. Let me take a look at your wound. It's gettin' lighter, an' I can see better now. The moon's up, an' she's shinin' for all she's worth through them trees. Besides, them cannon-flashes help. Raise up your head, pardner, an' we'll take a look at your wound together."

"I don't think you can do any good," said the wounded man. "It would be better not to disturb it."

"But we must be movin', pardner," said Joyce, a little impatiently. "See, the fight's warmin'

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up, an' it's still creepin' down on us. Seems to me I can almost hear the tramp of the men an' the rollin' of the cannon-wheels. Jerusalem! what a blaze that was! I say, it's time for us to be goin'. If we stay here we're likely to be ground to death under the cannon-wheels, if we ain't shot first. Just let me get a grip under your shoulders, pardner, an' I'll take you out of this."

The cannon flamed up again, and the deep thunder filled all the night.

"Listen how them old iron throats are growlin' an' mutterin'," said Joyce; "an' they're sayin' it's time for us to be travelin'."

"I believe," said the wounded man, "that I would rather stay where I am an' take my chances. If I move I'm afraid I'll break open my wound. Besides, I think you're mistaken. It seems to me that the fight's passin' round to the right of us."

"Passin' to the right of us nothin'," said Joyce. "It's coming straight this way, with no more respect for our feelin's than if you an' me was a couple of field-mice."

The wounded man made no answer.

"Do you think, pardner," asked Joyce, slight offence showing in his voice, "that the Yanks may come this way an' pick you up an' then you won't be a prisoner? Is that your game?"

As his companion made no answer, Joyce continued:

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"You don't think, pardner, that I want to hold you a prisoner, do you? an' you a wounded man, too, that I picked up on the battle-field and that I've eat and drank with? Why, that ain't my style."

He waited for an answer and as none came he was seized with a sudden alarm.

"You ain't dead, pardner?" he cried. "Jerusalem! what if he's died while I've been standin' here talkin' an' wastin' time!"

He bent over to take a look at the other's face, but the wounded man, with a sudden and convulsive movement, writhed away from him and struck at him with his open hand.

"Keep away!" he cried. "Don't touch me! Don't come near me! I won't have it! I won't have it!"

"Thunderation, pardner!" exclaimed Joyce; "what do you mean? I ain't goin' to harm you. I want to help you." Then he added, pityingly, "I guess he's got the fever an' gone out of his head. So I'll take him along whether he wants to go or not."

He bent over again, seized the wounded man by the shoulders, and forcibly raised him up. At the same moment the cannonade burst out afresh and with increased violence. A blaze of light played over the face of the wounded man, revealing and magnifying every feature, every line.

Joyce uttered no exclamation, but he dropped

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the man as if he had been a coiling serpent in his hands, and looked at him, an expression of hate and loathing creeping over his face.

"So," he said, at last, "this is the way I have found you?"

The wounded man lay as he had fallen, with his face to the earth.

"No wonder," said Joyce, "you wanted to keep your face hid in the grass! No wonder you hide it there now!"

"Oh, Dave! Dave!" exclaimed the man, springing to his knees with sudden energy, "don't kill me! Don't kill me, Dave!"

"Why shouldn't I kill you?" asked Joyce, scornfully. "What reason can you give why I shouldn't do it?"

"There ain't any. There ain't any. Oh, I know there ain't any," cried the wounded man. "But don't do it, Dave! For Christ's sake don't do it!"

"You murderer! You sneakin', ambushin' murderer!" said Joyce. "It's right for you to beg for your life an' then not get it! Hear them cannon! Hear how they growl, an' see the flash from their throats! They'd like to feed on you, but they won't. That sort of death is too good for the likes of you. The death for you is to be shot like a ravin' cur."

He drew the loaded pistol from his belt and cocked it with deliberate motion.

"Dave! Dave!" the man cried, dragging him-

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self to Joyce's feet, "you won't do that! You can't! It would be murder, Dave, to shoot me here, me a wounded man that can't help myself!"

"You done it, an' worse," said Joyce. "Of all the men unburnt in hell I think the one who deserves to be there most is the man who hid in ambush and shot another in the back that had never harmed him."

"I know it, Dave, I know it!" cried the wounded man, grasping Joyce's feet with both hands. "It was an awful thing to do, an' I've been sorry a thousand times that I done it, but all the sorrow in the world an' everythin' else that's in the world can't undo it now."

"That's so," said Joyce, "but it don't make any reason why the murderer ought to be kept on livin'."

"It don't, Dave; you're right, I know; but I don't want to die!" cried the man. "I'm a coward, Dave, and I don't want to die by myself here in the woods an' in the dark!"

"You'll soon have light enough," said Joyce, "an' I won't shoot you."

He let down the hammer of his pistol and replaced the weapon in his belt.

"Oh, Dave! Dave!" exclaimed the man, kissing Joyce's foot. "I'm so glad you'll let me have my life. I know I ain't fit to live, but I want to live anyhow."

"I said I wouldn't shoot you," said Joyce, "but

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I never said I'd spare your life. See that blaze in the trees up there."

A few hundred yards away the forest had burst into flame. Sparks fell upon a tree and blazed up. Long red spirals coiled themselves around the trunk and boughs until the tree became a mass of fire, and then other tongues of flame leaped forward and seized other trees. There was a steady crackling and roaring, and the wind that had sprung up drove smoke and ashes and fiery particles before it.

"That," said Joyce, "is the wood on fire. Them cannon that's been makin' so much fuss done it. I've seen it often in battle when the cannon have been growlin'. The fire grows an' it grows, an' it burns up everythin' in its way. The army is still busy fightin', an' the wounded, them that's hurt too bad to help theirselves, have to lay there on the ground an' watch the fire comin', an' sure to get 'em. By an' by it sweeps down on 'em, an' they shriek an' shriek, but that don't do you no good, for before long the fire goes on, an' there they are, dead an' burnt to a coal. I tell you it's an awful death!"

The wounded man was silent now. He had drawn himself up a little, and was watching the fire as it leaped from tree to tree and devoured them one after another.

"That fire is comin' for us, an' the wind is bringin' it along fast," said Joyce, composedly, "but it's easy enough for me to get out of its

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way. All I've got to do is to go up the hill, an' the clearin's run for a long way beyond. I can stay up there an' watch the fire pass, an' you'll be down here right in its track."

"Dave!" cried the man, "you ain't goin' to let me burn to death right before your eyes?"

"That's what I mean to do," said Joyce. "I don't like to shoot a wounded man that can't help himself, an' I won't do it, but I ain't got no call to save you from another death."

"I'd rather be shot than burned to death," cried the man, in a frenzy.

"It's just the death for you," said Joyce.

Then the wounded man again dragged himself to the feet of Joyce.

"Don't do it, Dave!" he cried. "Don't leave me here to burn to death! Oh, I tell you, Dave, I ain't fit to die!"

"Take your hands off my feet," said Joyce. "I don't want 'em to touch me. There's too much blood on 'em."

"Don't leave me to the fire!" continued the man. "You've been kind to me to-night. Help me a little more, Dave, an' you'll be glad you done it when you come to die yourself!"

"I must be goin'," said Joyce, repulsing the man's detaining hands. "It's gettin' hot here now, an' that fire will soon be near enough to scorch my face. Good-by."

"For the sake of your own soul, Dave Joyce," cried the man, beating the ground with his

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hands, "don't leave me to be burned to a coal! Think, Dave, how we eat an' drank together to-night, like two brothers, an' how you waited on me an' brought the water an' the grub. You'll remember them things, Dave, when you come to die yourself!"

The fire increased in strength and violence. The flames ran up the trees, and whirled far above them in red coils that met and twined with each other, and then whirled triumphantly on in search of fresh fuel. A giant oak, burned through at the base and swept of all its young boughs and foliage, fell with a rending crash, a charred and shattered trunk. The flames roared, and the burning trees maintained an incessant crackling like a fire of musketry. The smoke through which the sparks of fire were sown in millions grew stifling.

"God, what a sight!" cried Joyce.

"Dave, you won't leave me to that?" cried Ryder.

Joyce drew down his hat over his eyes to shield them from the smoke. Then he stooped, lifted the wounded man upon his powerful shoulders, and went on over the hill.

“MANY WATERS”

BY MARGARET DELAND

"MANY WATERS"

BY MARGARET DELAND

I

"WELL?"

"True bill; I'm awfully sorry."

Thomas Fleming took his cigar out of his mouth, and contemplated the lighted end. He did not speak. The other man, his lawyer, who had brought him the unwelcome news, began to make the best of it.

"Of course, it's an annoyance; but—"

"Well, yes. It's an annoyance," Fleming said, dryly.

Bates chuckled. "It strikes me, Tom, considering the difference between this and the *real thing*, that 'annoyance' is just the right word to use!"

Fleming leaned over and knocked off the ashes from his cigar into his waste basket. He was silent.

"As for Hammond, he won't have a leg to stand on. I don't know what Ellis & Grew meant by letting him take the case before the Grand Jury. He won't have a leg to stand on!"

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"Give me a light, will you, Bates? This cigar has gone out again."

"What has Hammond got, anyhow?" Bates continued, pulling a box of wax matches out of his waistcoat pocket; "what's he got to support his opinion that you pinched \$3,000 from the Hammond estate? His memory of something somebody said twelve years ago, and an old check. Well, we won't do a thing to 'em!"

Fleming got up and began to pull down his desk top with a slow clatter. "Hammond's a fool," he said; "and you'll punch a hole in his evidence in five minutes. But it's—well, as you say, it's 'annoying.'"

The lawyer rose briskly and reached for his hat. "What we want now is to get the case up near the head of the list as soon as we can. Get it over! Get it over! Then, if you want revenge, we can turn round and hit back with 'malicious prosecution'!" He laughed, good-naturedly, and shrugged himself into his overcoat.

His client stood absently locking and unlocking his desk. "I suppose it will be in the evening papers?" he said.

"Oh, I guess so," the younger man said, easily; "the findings of the Grand Jury were reported at eleven this morning. Plenty of time for the first editions."

"Then I'll take an early train home," Thomas Fleming said, quickly; "my wife—" he paused.

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“Doesn’t Mrs. Fleming know about it?” the lawyer said, with a surprised look.

“No,” the other man said, gloomily; “I didn’t want her to worry over it, so I didn’t say anything. But, of course, now she’s got to know.”

“Yes,” Bates said, sympathetically; “but after all, Fleming, it’s a small matter, except for the nuisance of it. You tell her I say it’s a sure thing.”

Fleming let his key-ring drop, jingling, into his pocket. Except for the occasional faint clangor of cars far down in the streets, the room, high up in the big office building, was quiet; but its quiet was the muffled, inarticulate, never-ending roar of living, rising from below. Fleming sighed, and, turning his back to his lawyer, stared absently out of the window. Before him, in the afternoon dusk, lay the struggling, panting city. Far off to the south he could see the water, and ferryboats crawling like beetles back and forth. Below, the deep canyons of the streets were blurred with creeping yellow fog; but higher up, above the crowding roofs and chimneys and occasional spires, the air was clearer; it was full of tumultuous movement—sudden jets of white steam ballooning from hundreds of escape pipes; shuffling, shifting coils of black smoke; here and there the straining quiver of flags, whipping out from their masts. Fleming, his hands in his pockets, stood staring and listening—with unsee-

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ing eyes, unhearing ears. The lawyer behind him, at the office door, hesitated.

"Fleming, really, it isn't going to amount to anything. Of course, I know how you feel about Mrs. Fleming, but—"

The man at the window turned round. "Rather than have her disturbed, I'd compromise on it. I'd pay him. I'd—"

The lawyer raised his eyebrows. "This time, I think, Hammond is honest. I guess he really believes he has a case; but Ellis & Grew are sharks, and you'd be encouraging blackmail to compromise. Anyway, you couldn't do it. Grew volunteered the information that their man 'couldn't be bought off'; he meant to put it through, Grew said. I told him they'd got the wrong pig by the ear. I told him that Thomas Fleming wasn't the kind of man who purchases peace at the cost of principle. They're shysters, and I gave 'em plain talk. Now, don't let Mrs. Fleming take it to heart. Tell her I say it will be a triumph!"

He went off, laughing; and a minute later Fleming heard his step in the corridor, and then the clang of the elevator door. He took up his black cloth bag and poked about in it among some papers; then unlocked his desk and found what he had been looking for—a box of candy for his wife. He slipped it into his bag, and a minute or two later he was down in the muddy dusk of the street. As he moved along with the

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steady surge of the homeward-bound crowd, he looked doubtfully into the flower stores; he wished he had bought violets for Amy instead of candy; he had taken her candy last Saturday. He debated whether he had not better get the violets too, but decided against them, because Amy was stern with him when he was extravagant for her sake. She never saw extravagance in any purchase he made on his own account! He smiled to himself at the thought of her sweet severity.

“Amy keeps me in order,” he used to say, whimsically; “she insists that I shall be *her* best; it appears that my own best isn’t good enough for her!” This she would always deny, indignantly, and indeed justly; for Thomas Fleming stood on his own legs, morally, in his community. But in the ten years of their married life no doubt her ideals, in small matters, had created his. With his indolent good-nature, he had found it easier to agree with Amy’s delicate austerities of thought than to dispute them. Her hair-splitting in matters of conscience always amused him, and sometimes touched him, but he accepted her standards of duty with real tenderness—which, for all practical purposes, was as good as conviction. Gradually, too, she pushed him, gently, before he knew it, into civic affairs; not in any very large way; perhaps hardly more than in a readiness to do his part as a citizen; but such readiness was sincere, and had given him a

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reputation for public-spiritedness in which Amy took a quiet pride. He had never had time, though he had had opportunity, to hold office, because his business demanded his entire energy; and, in fact, he had to be energetic, for he had hardly any capital, his income being almost entirely dependent upon his earnings; so he was not at all a rich man—except, indeed, as he was rich in the honor and respect of the community, and the love of a woman like Amy.

But then, if they were not rich in this world's goods, neither were they poor. There had been happy, anxious years, when they were first married, when they had ridiculously little to live on; but in those days Amy had steered their house-keeping bark between all rocks of hardship, as well as past breakers of extravagance. Even now, when things were easier each year, Amy was still prudent and economical, at least where she herself was concerned.

So Fleming, smiling, forbore to add a bunch of violets to his box of candy. After all, it was his thought that would bring the delicate and happy color up into her face, not the gift itself. They were very happy, these two; perhaps because they were only two. There had been a baby, but it had only lived long enough to draw them very close together, and not, as sometimes happens, to push them apart again; and there were many friends. But they were alone in their household and in the real heart of life.

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Naturally, all the thwarted maternity of the woman was added to the wife's love; and the paternal instinct of the man (which is, for the most part, only amusement, and the sense of protecting and giving joy) was centred in his wife.

So it was no wonder that that night, going home on the train, he winced at the thought of telling her that that “fool Hammond,” who “would not have a leg to stand on,” had prosecuted him criminally for misappropriation of funds as trustee of old Mrs. Hammond's estate. The trusts had been closed at her death a month or two before, and the estate handed over to her son—this same Hammond who “thought he remembered” hearing old Smith say, twelve years before, that he, Smith, had paid the Hammond estate \$17,400 for a parcel of land; whereas Fleming's trustee account put the sum received at \$14,400.

Amy's husband set his teeth as he sat there in the train, planning how he should tell her. Her incredulous anger he foresaw; and her anxiety—the anxiety of the woman unversed in legal matters. He damned Hammond in his heart; and pulled out his evening paper. There it was, in all the shamelessness of the flaring headline: “A Leading Citizen Indicted!” and so on. The big black letters were like a blow in the face. Fleming felt that every commuter on the train was looking over the top of his newspaper at him. He found himself glancing furtively across the

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aisle to see what page of the paper another passenger was reading; he thanked God that none of the men he knew well were on the five o'clock, so he would not have to listen to friendly assurances of astonishment at Hammond's impudence. His skin was prickly over his whole body; his ears were hot. And he had to tell Amy! He sank his head down between his shoulders and pulled his hat over his eyes, in pretence of a nap; then, suddenly, sat bolt upright. The fact was, Thomas Fleming had no experience in disgrace, and did not know how to conduct himself. When the door banged open at his station, he swung off on to the rainy platform, and plodded slowly up the lane in the darkness to his own house. It seemed to him as though his very feet hung back!

As the gate closed behind him, he saw an instant crack of light at the front door; and when his foot touched the lowest step of the porch, the door opened wide, and Amy stood there—it was rarely Jane who let him in or even his own latchkey!

"Go right into the house! You'll take cold," he commanded.

But she drew him inside with eager welcome. "Why, how *did* you manage to get the five o'clock? I heard the gate shut, and could hardly believe my ears! Oh, your coat is damp; has it begun to rain? Hurry! take it off. Then come into the library and get warm." She possessed

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herself of one of his hands, so that he had to dive into his bag as best he could with the other, to fish out her box of candy. She took it, smiling, with gay pretence of scolding, and then checked herself. “You look tired, Tom. When you’ve had your dinner (we have a good dinner to-night; I wish you had brought some man home with you!) you’ll feel better.”

He dropped down into his chair by the fire in silence, frowning slightly, and drawing impatiently away from her. Thomas Fleming did not always like to be fussed over; there were times when, perhaps, he endured it with a mildly obvious patience. Every tender woman knows this patience of a good and bored man. Amy Fleming knew it, and smiled to herself, quite unoffended. Something had bothered him? Well, he should not be talked to! But she looked at him once or twice. In her soft gray dress, with her gray eyes, and the sweet color in her cheeks, she brooded over him like a dove. At dinner his silence continued. Amy, being wise beyond her sex, fell into a silence of her own—the blessed, comprehending silence of love. When they came back from the dining-room to the library fireside, she let him smoke uninterruptedly, while she sewed. Sometimes her eyes rested on him, quietly content with his mere presence. But she asked no question. Suddenly, with a half-embarrassed cough, he said:

“Ah, Amy—”

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"Yes? Tell me; I knew you hadn't had a good day."

When he had told her, she sat dumb before him. Her face was white, and her eyes terror-stricken. But that was only for the first moment. Almost instantly there was the relief of anger. She stood up, her delicate face red, her voiced strained.

"To accuse you! *You!*"

It was just what Bates had said. The first thought everywhere would be of the absurdity of such a charge against Thomas Fleming.

"It's blackmail," Amy said, trembling very much.

"Of course we shall have no difficulty in throwing them down," he said. "They bring their case, really, on Smith's old check to me for \$17,400."

"I don't understand?" Amy said. It had always been a joke between them that Amy did not know anything about business, so she tried to smile when she asked him to explain.

"Oh," he said, impatiently, "it's simple enough. L. H. Smith owed me \$3,000—a personal matter. I once sold him some stock; he gave me his note; had to renew two or three times; thing sort of hung fire. You wouldn't understand it, Amy. But when he bought this Hammond property for \$14,400, he made out the check for \$17,400;—

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he'd had a windfall, so he could pay me what he owed me, see? I got my money. Understand?”

“Perfectly,” she said; “what a rascal Hammond is!”

“Oh, well, I suppose this time he really thinks he has a case; though on general principles I believe he's equal to blackmail! But he has succeeded in getting from the Smith heirs that old check for the total amount, and I suppose he thinks he has me. He'll find himself mistaken. But it's a nasty business,” he ended, moodily; “there will always be people who will think—”

“What do we care what such people think?” she said, passionately.

Her husband was silent. Amy's knees were shaking under her. “Oh, I could kill that man, I could kill him!”

Well as he knew her, he looked at her with astonishment—this mild creature to speak with such deadly, vindictive passion! She came and knelt down beside him; he felt her heart pounding in her side.

“Oh,” she said, brokenly, “I know—”

“You know what?”

She spoke very softly. “I know how they felt; those women, ‘looking on, afar off.’”

“Looking on?” he said, vaguely. And Amy, her face still hidden on his breast, said in a whisper:

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"It must have been easier for—for Him, on the cross, than for them to see Him there."

He moved abruptly in his chair; then, with a faint impatience, said she mustn't talk that way. "It's foolish!" he said, irritably. She kissed him, silently; and went back to her seat by the fire.

"I'll get out of it all right," Fleming said; "Bates says so. It's annoying"—he found himself falling back on Bate's word—"but there's nothing to it. You mustn't worry. Bates says Hammond is crazy to undertake it; Smith being dead, and—" Then he stopped.

"I don't worry; in the sense of being afraid that—" she could not even put into words the fear that she did not have. "But to have your name mixed up with anything dishonorable—even though it will come out clear and shining as heaven!"

He made no answer. The fatigue of the day was showing in his face—a heavy, handsome face, with a somewhat hard mouth. His wife, looking at him, said, quietly:

"Don't let's talk about it, dearest, any more to-night. It's only on the surface; it isn't a real trouble."

He nodded, gratefully; and they did not speak of it again.

But that night Amy Fleming, lying motionless in her bed, stared into the darkness until the glimmering oblong of the window told her that dawn had come.

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II

“Trouble shows us our friends,” Amy said, smiling. And indeed it did, in the Flemings’ case. When the news of the indictment of Thomas Fleming fell upon his community, there was a moment of stunned astonishment; then of protest and disbelief.

“Hammond is up against it,” men said to each other; “Fleming? What nonsense!”

The first day or two, while it was still a nine days’ wonder, public confidence was almost an ovation. The small house behind the trim hedges was crowded with Amy’s women friends, coming and going, and quoting (after the fashion of women friends) what their respective husbands said:

“*Of course* Mr. Hammond has no case, Amy, darling! My Tom—or Dick or Harry—says so.”

Amy did not need such assurances. She knew her husband! So she held her head proudly, and with certainty. Not certainty of the outcome of the trial—because, secretly, she had the unreasoning terror of most women of sheltered lives for the very word *law*; it meant power; wicked power, even! The opportunity of evil to get the better of goodness. But her pride and certainty were for Thomas Fleming’s honor, and goodness, and courage. She was a little cold when these tender women friends tried to re-

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assure her, quoting the opinion of their menfolk; she did not want, by eager agreement, to imply that she needed reassurance. She said, with gentle dignity, that she was sorry Mr. Hammond was so—foolish. Tom had been trustee of the Hammond estate for nearly twenty years, and he had given time and service—"service," she said, the color rising faintly in her face, "that money could not have paid for." And to have the Hammonds turn upon him now!—"Though, of course, it is only Mr. Hammond," Amy corrected herself, carefully just; "the rest of the family are nice people. His mother was such an honorable woman. And his wife—I am sorry for his wife." Amy thought a great deal about this wife. "She must know what he is, poor soul!" she said to herself. And knowing, she could not respect him. And without respect, love must have crumbled away. She said something like this to her most intimate friend, almost in a whisper, because expression was not easy to Amy. "When Mrs. Hammond realizes that he is a blackmailer, what *will* she do!"

"Poor thing!" said the other woman; "but, Amy, I suppose she is fond of him? He has been a good husband, they say."

"A good husband? How do you mean? Kind? A good provider?" Amy said, with a droop of her lip.

"Well, my dear, at least the man has been faithful to her; among all the horrid things that

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have been said about him, nobody has said—*that.*”

“They had better have said ‘that’!” Amy said. “Oh, Helen, faithful to her with his body; but what about his mind? Don’t you suppose a good woman could forgive the poor, sinful body? But the mind, the sinful mind! It is so much worse.”

Her friend looked doubtful. “I suppose it is,” she said; “but I think most wives could forgive the sinful mind more easily than—other things. And she is fond of him,” she repeated.

“Fond of him! when she can’t respect him? Oh, no, no!”

“Perhaps she doesn’t know how bad he is,” the other said, thoughtfully.

“What!” said Amy, “when she has lived with him for fifteen years? Of course she knows him. And I truly pity her,” she ended simply.

So in spite of her deep resentment at Hammond, Amy felt something like tenderness for Hammond’s wife—losing both respect and love, poor soul!

As the weeks passed before the day set for the trial, Amy grew perceptibly thinner and whiter. For beneath all her certainties, the fear of the Law remained. She brooded over instances of goodness suspected, of innocent men condemned, of the blunders and mistakes of Justice. It was not until three or four days before the trial that Bates realized what even Thomas Fleming had

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not understood, that she was consumed with *fear*. Fear of prison walls, of unmerited disgrace, of her house left unto her desolate. When the lawyer penetrated the tense cheerfulness with which she held herself in Tom's presence, and saw the fright below, he roared with laughter; which, though ill-mannered, was the best thing he could have done.

"You think I'm a fool?" she said, with a quivering smile.

"My dear lady, it would not be polite for me to use such a word; but certainly you—well, you are mistaken."

"Oh, *say* I am a fool," she pleaded; "I would like to think I was a fool! But, Mr. Bates, the Law can be made to do such dreadful things. Innocent people have been put into jail; oh, you know they have," she said, her face trembling; "and at night I lie awake and think—" He saw her hands grip each other to keep steady.

"Now let me explain it to you," he said kindly; "and then you won't be frightened; why, you'll be so sure you'll send out invitations for a dinner party on the 19th, so we can celebrate! And mind you have plenty of champagne."

Then, very explicitly, he laid before her the grounds of his confidence. Hammond, to start with, was a fool. "He always has been a cheap fellow; a sort of smart Aleck, you know; but this time he's just a fool." He had fallen into

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the hands of a shyster firm, who were milking him—“If you’ll forgive the slang.”

“Oh, go on, go on!” she entreated.

Hammond, being a fool, and having this vague idea about the price paid by Smith for the land, and having secured the old check to prove (as he thinks) that such a price was paid, falls into the hands of these sharks. “They know there is nothing to it, but they think they can pull out a plum somehow,” said Mr. Bates. Then, carefully, he told her the story point by point. Briefly, it was, that while there was no question that \$17,400 had been paid to Thomas Fleming, Hammond could not disprove Fleming’s defence that only \$14,400 of it was to go to the Trust; and that the remaining \$3,000 was in payment of Smith’s debt to him. “See?” said Bates, kindly. As he spoke, the drawn look in her face lessened, and she drew one or two long breaths; and then, suddenly, she put her hands over her eyes, and he knew she wept. This sobered the rather voluble man. He protested, with friendly vociferation, that she must promise him not to give the matter another thought. And she, still trembling a little, looked up, smiling, and promised.

And, such being her temperament, she kept her promise. Perhaps it was the rebound from having gone down to the depths of fear; but certainly there was almost bravado in the reaction. She made up her mind to have the dinner party!

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Tom would come home, cleared, crowned with the vindication of his own integrity; and he would find love, and friendship, and respect ready to exult with him. Tom, however, objected to her project.

"It's all right," he said; "it's perfectly safe, as far as the verdict goes; but—" he stopped and frowned. It was evident that the plan did not please him. But for the once Amy did not consult his pleasure. She had her own views; and she did actually invite a party of old friends to dine with them on the evening when it was expected that the verdict would be given.

III

Amy, in her dove-colored dress, entered the court-room with her husband. During the trial, very quietly, and with a beautiful serenity, she kept her place at his side. If the proceedings troubled her, there was no indication of it. She looked a little tired, and once or twice a little amused. Sometimes she smiled at Thomas Fleming, and sometimes exchanged a word or two with Mr. Bates. But for the most part she was silent; and her repose was a spot of refreshment and beauty in the dingy court-room. Bates looked at her occasionally, with rather jovial encouragement; but she displayed no need of encouragement, and returned his smile cheerfully. Once he leaned over and said:

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"You make me think of a poem I read somewhere; now, what was the name of it? I can only remember two lines:

"In the fell clutch of circumstance,
I have not winched or cried aloud!"

That's as far as I can go; but that's what you make me think of."

She turned, smiling, and finished the verse. "It's Henley's 'I am the captain of my soul,'" she said. "I have it somewhere: I copied it once, because I cared so much for it. I'll read it to you to-night, after dinner."

"Do!" Bates said heartily, and turned away to listen to Fleming, who was on the stand. Fleming's evidence was as straightforward as the man himself. Yes, Smith (now deceased) had paid him in March, 1887, the sum of \$17,400. Of this, \$3,000 was on a personal account; \$14,400 was for a parcel of land belonging to the Hammond estate. The check was made to his order; he deposited it in his own bank account and immediately drew against it a check for \$14,400 to the order of the Trust. Then followed a very clear and definite statement of that money Smith owed him; a debt which he was unable to corroborate by his books, for the simple reason that his books had been burned in the great fire of that year. Over and over, back and forth, round and round, the prosecution went, gaining not an inch.

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Indeed, the end was obvious from the beginning. To assert that Thomas Fleming was an honest man was, so Bates told the jury, to utter a commonplace. He was so cheerful and kindly, in his reference to the unfortunate Mr. Hammond, that the jury grinned. The verdict, Bates declared, was a foregone conclusion. And so, in fact, it was, being rendered fifteen minutes after the jury had been charged.

"And now," said the good Bates, shaking hands with his client, "let's go and get something to eat! Come, Mrs. Fleming, you'll go with us? You look like an army with banners!"

But Amy, with proud eyes, said no; she must go home. "You will come out with Tom this evening?" she said. "Dinner is at half-past seven; you can dress at our house; and, of course, you must stay all night." Bates promised, and Fleming silently squeezed his wife's hand. Amy's heart was beating so that her words were a little breathless, but her eyes spoke to him.

She did not want to lunch with the two men; she had it in mind to go into a church which was near the court-house, and there, alone, in the silence and sacred dusk, return thanks upon her knees. And deep human experience gives the soul a chance to see God; and when Amy came out afterward into the roar of the street, her face shone like the face of one who has touched the garment hem of the Eternal, and bears back the Tables of Law. . . .

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The joyous and beautiful day passed; the afternoon was gay with congratulations; but the succession of friendly calls was fatiguing and at half-past five she said, courageously, “Now, dear friends, I’ll have to leave you! It’s delightful to hear all these nice things about Tom, but I must go and lie down, or I shall go to sleep at dinner.”

So there was more handshaking and gayety, and then, at last, she had the house to herself. She reflected that it would be well to have a little nap, so that she might be bright and rested for the jubilant evening;—oh, that poem Mr. Bates wanted to see! She had forgotten all about it; she must find it before she went upstairs. But she must first look into the dining-room to be sure about the candles and flowers and wine-glasses; three kinds of wine to-night! Generally Tom had just his glass of sherry; but to-night—! **The economical Amy** would have broached the tun of malmsey if she had been able to secure it. The dinner, she knew, would be good. She had picked out the partridges herself, knowing well, under her calm exterior, that her market man, looking at her with sidewise, curious eyes, was thinking to himself, “My! and her husband to be tried for a State’s prison offence!” The partridges were superb; and the salmon—Amy’s eyes sparkled with joy at the thought of such extravagance—salmon in February! the salmon was perfect; and the salad, the

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ices, the coffee—well, they would be worthy of the occasion!

The dining-room was satisfactory, with its ten friendly chairs drawn up about the sparkling table. And her best dress was upstairs spread out on the bed, with her slippers and gloves; her flowers—Tom would bring her her flowers! She thought to herself that she would wear them, and then put them away with her wedding bouquet, that had been lying, dry and fragrant, for all these years, with her wedding dress and veil. Sighing with the joy of it all, she climbed wearily half-way upstairs; then remembered Mr. Bates's poem again, and went back to the library, with an uneasy look at the hall clock. She would not get much of a nap! And the chances of the nap lessened still more, because she could not at once find her *Commonplace Book*, in which she had copied the poem. Taking out one book after another, she shook her head and looked at her hands—these shelves were very dusty; that told a housekeeping story that was disgraceful, she said to herself, gayly. Well, she would look after Jane, now that she could think and breathe again! So, poking about, pulling out one flexible, leather-covered volume after another, her fate fell upon her. . . .

The book looked like her own *Commonplace Book*; Tom had more than once given her blank-books just like his own—bound in red morocco, with mottled edges, and stamped, "*Diary, 18—*."

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There was a whole row of these books on one of the bottom shelves of the bookcase that ran round three sides of the room, and she had been looking at them, one by one, hurriedly, for she knew she needed that rest upstairs before the company came. She pulled the books out, impatiently, fluttering the leaves over, and putting them back. One or two were her own notebooks; but the rest were Tom's memoranda—accounts, notes, etc., etc., back to— “Why, dear me!” said Amy to herself, “they go back to before we were married!”

There was one date that caught her eye; she had heard it repeated and repeated in the last few weeks; she had heard it that very morning in court, when Thomas Fleming had said: “In March, 1887, L. F. Smith paid me in one check \$17,400; \$14,400 for a piece of land belonging to the Hammond estate, and \$3,000 which he owed my personal account.”

The flexible, red-covered diary marked 1887 drew her hand with the fascination which comes with remembered pain. Ah! how she had suffered every time that date fell like a scalding drop of fear upon her heart! It is not true of spiritual pain that one remembereth no more the anguish for joy that a blessing has been born into the soul! She shivered as she opened the book. It occurred to her, with vague surprise, that this book would probably have settled the whole matter, if Tom had only remembered it. He had

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shown in court that records of that year had been among certain office books burned in the great March fire, when the building in which he had his office had been destroyed. Yes, this book might have cleared the whole matter up, easily and quickly, for, as she saw at a glance, here were entries about the Hammond Trust. She forgot her fatigue, and the nap she ought to have; she forgot the poem altogether; she sat down on the floor, running the pages over eagerly. It occurred to her, as a climax of the successful day, that she would bring this book out at dinner (if she could only find something about the \$14,400) and show it as her final triumph. Then her eyes fell on the figures \$17,400.

"Received from L. H. Smith, to-day, \$17,400 for Hammond property, in Linden Hill." Then the comment, "A whacking good price. I hardly expected to get so much." The significance of this brief statement did not penetrate her joy. She began eagerly to look again for the other figures—and then turned back, perplexed. \$17,400 for the Hammond property? Suddenly her eye caught another familiar sum—\$3,000. Ah, now she would find it! Yes, verily, so she did. . . . "Borrowed \$3,000 from Hammond Estate to pay back money borrowed from Ropes Estate."

Suddenly it seemed to this poor woman, sitting on the floor in the dark corner of the library, her fingers dusty, her whole slender body tin-

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gling with fatigue—it seemed as if something fell, shuddering, down and down, and down in her breast. Strangely enough, this physical recognition informed her soul. She heard herself speak, as one falling into the unconsciousness of an anæsthetic hears, with vague astonishment, words faltering unbidden from the lips. “No. No. No,” came the body’s frightened denial.

“Then, in silence, the Soul: “He—did it. He did it.”

It was characteristic of Amy that she sought no loophole of escape. It never occurred to her that there could be an explanation. There were the figures; and the figures meant the facts. “*A certain man named Ananias*” (so suddenly, the words ran in her mind) “*sold a possession . . . and kept back part of the price.*”

Out in the hall the half-hour struck, muffled and mellow. Then silence.

“God, if he did it, I can’t live—can’t live. *God?*”

Suddenly the happenings of the day seemed to blur and run together, and there was a moment, not of unconsciousness, but of profound indifference. Her capacity for feeling snapped. But when she tried to rise, her whole being was sick; so sick that again the soul forgot or did not understand, and heard, with dull curiosity, the body saying, “No. No.” She steadied herself by holding on to the bookshelves; and then, somehow, she got upstairs. It was the sight of the

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soft, gray dress, with its pretty laces, that stung her awake. That dress: was it hers? Was she to put it on? Was she to go and sit at the head of that shining table down in the dining-room?

"But, you know, I—*can't*," she said aloud, her voice hoarse and falling.

.
But she did.

By the time Fleming and his counsel came tramping up from the gate, at a quarter past seven, and stopped hilariously, to kick the snow off their boots before entering the hall, Amy Fleming had arisen to meet the summons of Life. She called Jane to fasten her dress, and when the woman, startled and shocked at the shrunken face, cried out:

"Oh, good land! what's wrong wi' ye, Mrs. Fleming?" she was able to say, quietly:

"Jane, when Mr. Fleming comes in, tell him I've had to go down to the kitchen to see about some things. And say I put his dress suit out on the sofa in my room. Tell him the studs are in his shirt."

Jane, silenced, went back to the kitchen. "Say, Mary Ann," she said, "look a-here; there's something the matter upstairs." The presence of the accommodating waitress checked further confidences; but, indeed, when Amy Fleming, ghastly, in her pretty dinner dress, sought refuge in the kitchen (the one spot where her husband would not be apt to pursue her), and stood listen-

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ing to the voices of the two men going upstairs, Mary Ann needed no information that there was “something the matter.”

“She looks like she was dead,” the frightened women told each other.

“Jane,” her mistress said, “I wish you would open a bottle of champagne; one of the pints, not one of the big bottles, and give—me—a glass;” her voice was faint. Jane obeyed hurriedly, and as the cork popped one man upstairs called out gayly to the other, “Hullo! has it begun already?”

Amy drank the wine and handed the glass back to the anxious woman. “I was feeling faint, Jane. I am all right now, thank you. Oh, there’s the door bell! I’ll go into the library.” And when the two rather early comers had taken off their wraps and made their way downstairs again, they found their hostess smiling whitely at them from the hearthrug.

“Oh, Amy *dear!*” the wife said, dismayed, “what is the matter?” And the husband protested in a friendly way that he was afraid Mrs. Fleming was tired out. “Of course it has been a wearing week for you, in spite of its triumph,” he said, delicately.

Then Thomas Fleming and his lawyer came downstairs, and there was more handshaking and congratulations, and it was not until he looked at his wife at dinner that Fleming really saw her face; its haggard pallor struck him

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dumb in the midst of some gay story to the pretty neighbor on his right. He had been dull, just at first, and his gayety was a little forced, but after his first glass of champagne he brightened up very much, and had begun to tell a funny story. "And so the automobilist," he was saying—and broke off, staring blankly at Amy. "I'm afraid my wife is not well," he said, anxiously. But the pretty neighbor reassured him.

"Oh, it's the reaction, Mr. Fleming. Amy has been perfectly splendid; but now, naturally, she feels the reaction."

Somehow or other, with its gayety and good fellowship, that dreadful evening passed. When the friendly folk streamed out into the starry winter night, there was some anxious comment.

"How badly she looked!"

"My dear, can you wonder? Think what she's been through!"

But one woman, on her husband's arm, murmured a question: "You don't suppose he *could* have—done anything?"

"Twelve good men and true have said he didn't; your remark is out of order."

"But tell me, honestly, do you suppose it is possible that—that?"

"I don't know anything about it, Helen. I would bank on Tom Fleming as soon as on any man I know. But I don't know any man (myself included) who is not human. So, if you ask about 'possibilities'—but no! honestly, as you

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say, I'm sure Fleming is all right. And his wife is a noble woman. I've always admired Mrs. Fleming."

"She is the best woman in the world!" Amy's friend said, warmly. But in her own heart she was thinking that if it came to possibilities, she knew *one* man to whom wrongdoing was impossible! And, happily, she squeezed his arm, and brushed her cold, rosy cheek against his shoulder.

IV

When Fleming closed the door upon the last lingering guest, he turned anxiously to his wife. "Amy, I haven't had a chance to speak to you! You are worn out. Bates, look at her—she's worn out!"

Bates, lounging in the library doorway, agreed. "Indeed she is; Mrs. Fleming, you ought not to have attempted a dinner party. I believe it's all my fault, because I suggested it."

"It's your fault because you got me off," Fleming said, jocosely. The dulness of the first part of the evening had quite disappeared; he was rather flushed and inclined to laugh buoyantly at everything; but his face was anxious when he looked at his wife. "Amy, you must go right straight to bed!"

"I am going now," she said, pulling and straightening the fingers of her long gloves.

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"Good-night, Mr. Bates. I—will copy that poem for you—sometime," she ended faintly.

Her husband put his arm about her to help her upstairs, but she drew away. "No; stay down and smoke with Mr. Bates." Then, as he insisted on coming up with her, she stopped on the first landing, and pushed his arm away, sharply. "Please—*don't*? My head aches. Please—go away."

Thomas Fleming, dumfounded, could not find his wits for a reply before she had slipped away from him, and he heard the door of their bedroom close behind her. He stood blankly upon the stairs for a moment, and then went back to Bates.

"I never knew Amy so upset," he said, stupidly. And, indeed, there are few things more bewildering than sudden irrational irritation in a sweet and reasonable soul.

"It's been a hard week for her," Bates explained, easily. But Fleming smoked morosely; he was plainly relieved when his guest said he thought he would go to bed. He suggested, in a perfunctory way, a last visit to the dining-room for a drink of whiskey, and when this was declined, arose with alacrity to conduct the sleepy lawyer to the spare-room door.

"We'll take the eight-fifteen in the morning, Bates," he said; and Bates, yawning, agreed.

Fleming went softly into his own room, and was half disappointed, half relieved, to find his

wife lying motionless, with closed eyes. “A good night’s sleep will set her up,” he thought, tenderly. For himself, he stopped in the process of pulling off his boots, and, shutting his lips hard together, stared at the floor. . . . After a while he drew a long breath;—“Well, thank the eternal Powers,” he said; and pulled off his boots softly—Amy must have a good night’s sleep. Fleming himself had a good night’s sleep. That Amy’s eyes opened painfully to the dark, when all the house had sunk into silence, of course he did not know. She seemed to be sleeping soundly when he awoke the next morning; and again he crept about, not even daring to kiss her, lest she might be disturbed. Just before he and Bates made a dash for the eight-fifteen, he told Jane to ask Mrs. Fleming to call him up on the telephone when she came downstairs, so he might know how she was.

As for Amy, when she heard the front door close behind the two hurrying men, she got up and sat wearily on the side of the bed.

“Now, I’ve got time to think,” she said. There was a certain relief in the consciousness of silence and of time. She could think all day; she could think until half-past six; how many hours? Ten! Ten hours—in which to take up a new life. Ten hours in which to become acquainted with her husband.

“I have never known him,” she said feebly to herself. Well, now she must think. . . . No doubt

he had loved her; she was not questioning that. She was dully indifferent to the whole matter of love. The question was, what was she going to do? After restitution was made, what was she going to do? How were they to go on living? Mere restitution—(which must be made on Monday. No, Monday was a holiday; they would have to wait until Tuesday. Oh, how could she bear the delay?) Well, on Tuesday, then, the money would be given to Mr. Hammond. But mere restitution would not change the fact of what he was. She dropped back against her pillows, hiding her face. "I never knew him."

Oh, this would *not* do! She must think.

Poor soul! She had no thoughts but that one. Over and over the words repeated themselves, until her very mind was sore. But she did her best; the habit of common-sense was a great help. She had some coffee, and dressed and went down to the library—recoiling, involuntarily, at the sight of that corner where the books were still in some slight disorder. She even called Jane and bade her bring her duster. When the dusting was done, she told the woman that she would not see any one, all day. "I have a headache," she explained; "don't let any one in." And when Jane left her, she drew her little chair up to the hearth; "Now, I'll think," she said. But her eye caught the flash of sunlight on a crystal ball on the mantelpiece, and it seemed as if her mind broke into a glimmering kaleidoscope: those

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partridges had been a little overcooked last night . . . the gilt on the narrow, old-fashioned mirror over the mantel was tarnishing . . . the \$3,000 had been “borrowed” from one Trust to pay another. . . . Borrowing from Peter to pay Paul. . . . How clear the crystal was. . . . Two thefts. . . . Jane must dust those shelves better. . . . Then she started with dismay—she was not thinking! Well, restitution, first of all;—on Tuesday. They would sell a bond, and take some money out of the bank. But after restitution they must go on living. She must try to understand him, to help him to be good, to be patient with him. “But I don’t know him,” came over and over the dreadful refrain, checked by the instant determination: “Oh, I *must* think!”

So the day passed. She told Jane to telephone her husband that she was up and feeling better; and he sent back some anxious message—she must rest, she must not overdo. He could not, unfortunately, come out on an early train, as he had hoped to do, being detained by some business matters, so he would have to dine in town. He would come out on the eight-thirty. She grasped at the delay with passionate relief; two hours more to think. Then it came over her that she was glad not to see him. What did that mean? She wondered, vaguely, if she had stopped loving him? Not that it made any difference whether she loved him or not. Love had

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no meaning to her. "Perhaps this is the way people who are dead feel about us," she thought. Then she wondered if she hated him, this stranger, this—thief? No, she did not hate him either. But when respect, upon which love is built, is wrenched away, what happens? There is no love, of course. She thought, vaguely, that she had pitied Mrs. Hammond. And yet she herself did not care, apparently. How strange not to care! Pulling her wedding-ring off, slipping it on, pulling it off again, she said to herself, numbly, that she did not understand why she did not care. However, she could not go into this question of love and hate. Neither mattered. She beat her poor mind back to its task of "thinking."

The long, sunny winter afternoon faded into the dusk; a gleam of sunset broke yellow across the pleasant room, and catching with a glimmering flash on the crystal, melted into a bloom of gray, with the fire, like the spark of an opal, shifting and winking on the hearth.

When Fleming came hurriedly up the garden path to his own door, he had to pull out his latch-key to let himself into the house. This slight happening made him frown; so she was not well enough to come down? He took off his coat and started immediately upstairs, then he caught sight of her in the library, standing motionless, her back to the door, one hand resting on the mantelpiece, the other drooping at her side, the

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fingers between the pages of a book. He came in quickly, with a gayly derisive laugh.

“You didn’t hear me!” Then, as she did not turn, he sobered. “Amy, what is it? Why, Amy! Is there anything the matter? Is anything wrong?” His face was keenly disturbed, and he put his hand on her shoulder to make her look at him, but she lifted it away, gently, still keeping her eyes fastened on the fire.

“Yes. There is something—wrong.”

“Amy!” he said, now thoroughly alarmed, “what is the matter? Tell me!”

“I will tell you. Sit down. There: at the library table. I will—show you.”

He sat down, blankly, his lower-lip falling open with perplexity. She sighed once, and brushed her hand over her eyes; then came, quietly, away from the hearth, and, going round the table, stood behind him and laid the book down beside him. She pressed it open, and in silence ran her finger down the page.

V

The fire sputtered a little; then everything was still. She had left him, and had gone back to the hearthrug, and stood as before, one hand on the mantelpiece, the other, listless, at her side. The silence was horrible.

Then, suddenly, Thomas Fleming ripped and tore the pages out of the book, and threw them

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on the logs: the quick leap of the flames shone on his white face and his furious eyes. A minute afterward he spoke. . . . Under that storm of outrageous words she bent and shrunk a little, silently. Once she looked at him with a sort of curiosity. So this was her husband? Then she looked at the fire.

When, choking with anger, he paused, she said, briefly, that she had been hunting for her *Commonplace Book*, down on that lower shelf, and had found—this.

“What the devil were my diaries doing on your lower shelf? One of those damned women of yours poking—”

“When we moved they were put there. They had been in your old desk in the other house. They were locked up there. I suppose you forgot to lock them up here,” she ended, simply.

That next hour left its permanent mark on those two faces; agony and shame were cut into the wincing flesh, as by some mighty die. At first Fleming was all rage; then rage turned into sullenness, and sullenness to explanation and excuse. But as he calmed down, shame, an old, old shame, that he had loathed and lived with for a dozen years, a shame that, except when Amy was too tenderly proud of him, he was sometimes able for days, or even weeks, to forget—this old shame reared its deadly head, and looked out of his abased and shifting eyes. Yet he had his glib excuses and explanations. Amy,

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in the midst of them, sat down in her little low chair by the fire. She did not speak. She had her handkerchief in her hand, and kept pulling it out on her knee; smoothing it; then folding it; and a minute later, spreading it out again. At last, after a labored statement—how he had only borrowed it; how it had been at a time when he had been horribly pressed; how he had always meant to return it, of course; how, in fact, he had returned it by giving an enormous amount of work for which he had never had any credit, or any money, either! (though, as it happened, he had never been in a position to pay it back in actual cash); after this miserable and futile explanation had been repeated and repeated, he stopped to get his breath; and then, still pulling the hem of her handkerchief straight on her knee, his wife said, in a lifeless voice:

“Need we talk about it any more? On Tuesday we will send it back. (Monday is a holiday. You can’t send it until Tuesday.) Then we will never talk about it any more.”

“Send what back?”

“The money. To Mr. Hammond!”

“Are you out of your senses?” he said roughly.

She looked up, confusedly. “You can’t send it until Tuesday,” she repeated, mechanically.

He brought his fist down violently on the table. “I will never send it back! Never! You are insane! Why, it would be acknowledging—”

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"It would be confession," she agreed.

"Well! that would be ruin."

"Ruin?"

"Why, if people knew—" he began.

"It is ruin, anyhow," she said, dully. "Don't you see? The only thing left is restitution."

"I can't make what you call—'restitution,' without—ruin; absolute ruin! Do you realize what it would mean to me, in this town, to have it known that I—borrowed from the Trust, and—and had not yet returned it? On the stand, of course, I had to protect myself; and that would be—against me. And it *would* be known. Hammond would never let it be settled privately! He couldn't prosecute me on the old charge; but I suppose he might make a claim of—of perjury. Anyhow, just the publicity would ruin me. And he would make it public. Trust Hammond! Besides, I've given it back ten times over in unpaid-for work to the Estate—" He stopped abruptly. Amy had fainted. . . .

Sunday was a long day of struggle. The immediate hour of violence was over; he was ashamed; and he loved her; and he was frightened. But he was immovable. His hardness was worse than his violence.

"I can not do it, Amy; I will not do it. The thing is done. It's over. It's settled. I'm sorry; I—regret it; nobody regrets it as much as I do. But I will not destroy myself, and destroy you—you, too!—by returning it." Then,

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sullenly, “Anyway, I don’t owe it, morally. I’ve more than made it up to them.”

Monday, the holiday (and holidays had always been such joy to them; a whole day at home together!)—Monday, they struggled to the death.

It was in the afternoon that she suddenly flagged. She had been kneeling beside him, entreating him; and he had been hard and violent and childish by turns; but he would not. And toward dusk there came a dreadful pause. Partly, no doubt, it was because she was exhausted; but it was more than that. It was a sudden blasting consciousness that the man must save or lose his own soul. If she forced him to make restitution, the restitution would not be his, but hers. If she pushed him into honesty, he would still be dishonest. If he preferred the mire, he would be filthy if plucked out against his will and set on clean ground. A prisoner in heaven is in hell! No, he must save himself. She could not save him.

She drew away and looked at him; then she covered her face with her hands. “I am done,” she said, faintly.

The suddenness of her capitulation left him open-mouthed. But before he could speak she went away and left him. He heard her slip the bolt of their bedroom door; and then he heard her step overhead. After that all was still.

The afternoon was very long; once he went and walked drearily about the snowy lanes,

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avoiding passersby as well as he could. But for the most part he sat in the library and tried to read or smoke; but he forgot to turn over the pages, and he had to keep reaching for a match to relight his cigar. He said to himself that his life was over. Amy would leave him, of course; she had said as much. Well, he couldn't help it. Better the misery of a broken home than public shame, and disgrace, and ruin. And he had made restitution (as she called it); he had made it many times over!

It was late at night, as he was saying something like this to himself for the hundredth time, that his wife came back into the room. She stood up in the old place, on the hearthrug. Very gently she told him what she had to say. She did not look at him; her eyes were fixed on the Japanese crystal resting in its jade bowl on the mantelpiece; once she took it up, and turned it over and over in the palm of her hand, looking at it intently as she spoke. But probably she did not even see it.

"I have thought it all out," she began in a low voice; "and I see I was wrong—" He started. "I was wrong. You must save your own soul. I can't do it for you. Oh, I would! but I can't. I shall not ever again insist. Yes, the Kingdom of God must be within you. I never understood that before."

"Amy," he began, but she checked him.

"Please!—I am not through yet. I shall pay

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the money back, somehow, sometime. (Oh, wait—wait; *don't* interrupt me!) Of course, I shall not betray you. My paying it shall not tell the truth, because, unless the truth is from you, it can not help you. It must be your truth, not mine. But I shall save, and save, and save, and pay it back—to clear my own soul. For I—I have lived on that three thousand dollars too,” she said with a sick look. She put the crystal back into its bowl. “It will take—a long time,” she said, faintly.

She stopped, trembling from the effort of so many calm words. Thomas Fleming, looking doggedly at the floor, said: “I suppose you’ll get a separation?”

“Get a separation?” she glanced at him for an instant. “Why, we are separated,” she said. “We can’t be any more separated than we are. I suppose we have never been together. But I won’t leave you, if that is what you mean.”

“You’ll stay with me?” he burst out; “I thought you despised me!”

“Why, no,” she said, slowly; “I don’t think I despise you. I don’t think I do. But of course—” She looked away, helplessly. “Of course, I have no respect for you.”

“Well,” he said, “I’m sorry. But there’s nothing I can do about it.”

Amy turned, listlessly, as if to go upstairs again; but he caught her dress.

“You really mean you won’t—leave me?”

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"No, I won't leave you."

"Of course," he said, roughly, "you don't love me; but—" His voice faltered into a sort of question.

She turned sharply from him, hiding her face in her arm, moving blindly, with one hand stretched out to feel her way, toward the door. "Oh," she said; "oh—I'm afraid—I—"

And at that he broke. . . . Poor, weak Love, poor Love that would have denied itself for very shame; Love brought him to his knees; his arms around her waist, his head against her breast, his tears on her hand.

"Amy! *I will do it. I will give it back.* Oh, Amy, Amy—"

“TO MAKE A HOOSIER HOLIDAY”

BY GEORGE ADE

“TO MAKE A HOOSIER HOLIDAY”

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IF you will take a map of the State of Indiana and follow with your pencil one of the many railway lines radiating from Indianapolis, you will find, if you are extremely diligent in your search, a black speck marked “Musselwhite.” It is not an asterisk, meaning a county seat—simply a speck on the enameled surface. Furthermore, it is one of many specks. A map which shows all of the towns of the Musselwhite kind looks like a platter of caviare—a mere scramble of dark globules, each the same as the others.

As a matter of fact, Musselwhite seemed one of a thousand to the sleepy travelers in the parlor cars. Lying back on their upholstered griddles, slowly baking to a crisp, they would be aroused by a succession of jolts and grinds and would look out with torpid interest at a brindle-colored “depot,” a few brick stores ornately faced with cornices of galvanized iron, a straggling row of frame houses, priggled out with scallops and protuberant bay windows, a few alert horses at the

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hitch-rack and a few somnolent Americans punctuated along the platform. Then the train would laboriously push this panorama into the background and whisk away into the cornfields, and the travelers would never again think of Musselwhite. Certainly they would never think of it as a hotbed of politics, an arena of social strivings, a Mecca for the remote farmhand and a headquarters for religious effort. Yet Musselwhite was all of these—and more.

The town had two wings of the Protestant faith, but they did not always flap in unison. They were united in the single belief that the Catholic congregation at the other end of town was intent on some dark plan to capture the government and blow up the public school system.

The Zion Methodist Church stood across the street from the Campbellite structure. Each had a high wooden steeple and a clangorous bell. Zion Church had an undersized pipe-organ which had to be pumped from behind. The Campbellites had merely an overgrown cottage organ, but they put in a cornet to help out—this in the face of a protest from the conservative element that true religion did not harmonize with any “brass-band trimmings.”

In the Campbellite Church the rostrum was movable, and underneath was a baptismal pool wherein the newly converted were publicly immersed. Whenever there was to be a Sunday night “baptizing” at the Campbellite Church, the

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attendance was overflowing. The Methodists could offer no ceremony to compare with that of a bold descent into the cold plunge, but every winter they had a "protracted meeting" which kept the church lighted and warmed for seven nights in the week. During this "revival" period the Campbellites were in partial eclipse.

It must not be assumed that there was any petty rivalry between the two flocks. It was the strong and healthy competition between two laborers in the vineyard, each striving to pick the larger bunch of grapes. If the Zion Church gave a mush-and-milk sociable, it was only natural that the Campbellites, in their endeavor to retain a hold on the friendly sympathies of Musselwhite, should almost immediately make announcement of a rummage party or an old people's concert. The Campbellites had their Sunday-school in the morning, preceding the regular service, and the Methodists had theirs in the afternoon. The attendance records and missionary collections were zealously compared. Unusual inducements were offered to the growing youth of Musselwhite to memorize the golden text and fight manfully for the large blue card which was the reward for unbroken attendance. In Musselwhite, as in many other communities, there were parents who believed in permitting the children to attend two religious services every Sunday, thereby establishing a good general average for the family, even if the parents remained at

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home to read the Sunday papers. The children found no fault with this arrangement. The morning Sunday-school was a sort of full-dress rehearsal for the afternoon service, to which the children flocked in confident possession of those hidden meanings of the Scripture which can always be elucidated by a hardware merchant who wears dark clothes once a week.

At Christmas time the "scholars" found themselves in a quandary. Each church had exercises Christmas Eve. A child can not be in two places at the same time, no matter how busy his effort or how earnest his intention. And so it came about that the congregation offering the more spectacular entertainment and the larger portion of mixed candy drew the majority of the lambkins. The rivalry between the Methodists and the Campbellites touched perihelion on Christmas Eve. An ordinary Christmas tree studded with tapers, festooned with popcorn, and heavy with presents no longer satisfied the junior population, for it had been pampered and fed upon novelty. The children demanded a low-comedy Santa Claus in a fur coat. They had to be given star parts in cantatas, or else be permitted to speak "pieces" in costume. One year the Campbellites varied the programme by having a scenic chimney-corner erected back of the pulpit. There was an open fireplace glowing with imitation coals. In front of the fireplace was a row of stockings, some of which were of

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most mirth-provoking length and capacity, for the sense of humor was rampant in Musselwhite. A murmur of impatient and restless curiosity rather interfered with the recitations and responsive readings which opened the programme. It rose to a tiptoe of eager anticipation when Mr. Eugene Robinson, the Superintendent of the Sunday-school, arose and, after a few felicitous remarks, which called forth hysterical laughter, read a telegram from Kriss Kringles saying that he would arrive in Musselwhite at 8:30 sharp. Almost immediately there was heard the jingle of sleighbells. The older and more sophisticated boys identified the tone as coming from a strand of bells owned by Henry Boardman, who kept the livery barn, but the minds of the younger brood were singularly free from all doubt and questioning. A distinct “Whoa!” was heard, and then the Saint, swaddled in furs and with a most prodigious growth of cotton whiskers, came right out through the fireplace with his pack on his back and asked in a loud voice, “Is this the town of Musselwhite?” His shaggy coat was sifted with snow, in spite of the fact that the night was rather warm and muggy, and his whole appearance tallied so accurately with the pictures in the books that the illusion was most convincing until “Tad” Saulsbury, aged twelve, piped in a loud voice: “I know who it is. It’s Jake Francis.”

His mother moved swiftly down the aisle and

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"churned" him into silence, after which the distribution of presents proceeded with triumphant hilarity.

It was generally conceded that the Campbellite chimney-corner entertainment rather laid over and topped and threw into the shade any other Christmas doings that had been witnessed in Musselwhite. That is why the Methodists were spurred to unusual effort one year later, and that is why "Doc" Silverton, Sam Woodson, and Orville Hufty, as a special committee on arrangements, met in the doctor's office one evening in November to devise ways and means.

"They're goin' to give another chimney-corner show," said "Doc" Silverton. "We've got to do something to offset it. I claim that the Christmas tree is played out. Since they've started shippin' in these evergreen trees from Chicago, a good many people have their own trees right at home. We can't very well take up the chimney-corner idee. It's too much like trailin' along behind the Campbellites and takin' their dust."

"We've got to give 'em something new and different," said Orville Hufty. "I sent and got a book that's supposed to tell how to get up shows for Christmas, but it's all about singin' songs and speakin' pieces, and we know by experience that such things don't ketch the crowd here in Musselwhite."

"I've been thinkin'," said Sam Woodson, very slowly, "that we might do this: Go to the Camp-

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bellites and segest that we take turn about in givin' exhibitions. That is, if they hold off this year, we'll give them a clear field next year."

"Not much!" exclaimed "Doc" Silverton, with great decision. "That'd look like a clean back-down. Don't give 'em anything to crow about. Let's beat 'em at their own game. We can do it if you'll help me on a little scheme that I've been layin' awake nights and thinkin' about. Don't laugh when I tell you what it is. It's nothin' more or less than a weddin'."

"You mean to have somebody get married on Christmas Eve?" asked Mr. Hufty, looking at him coldly.

"That's it exactly," replied "Doc" with a grin of enthusiasm.

"What's gettin' married got to do with Christmas?" asked Sam Woodson.

"People get married every day," added Mr. Hufty.

"Not the people that I'm thinkin' about," said "Doc," leaning back and looking at them serenely. "Can you imagine what kind of a crowd we'll have in that church if we advertise that old 'Baz' Leonard is goin' to get married to Miss Wheatley?"

The other two committeemen gazed at "Doc" in sheer amazement, stunned by the audacity of his suggestion. "Baz" Leonard and Miss Wheatley! It took several moments for them to

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grasp the Napoleonic immensity of the proposition.

"Well, I'll be jiggered!" said Mr. Hufty. "How did you come to think of anything like that?"

"Is 'Baz' goin' to marry her?" asked Sam Woodson.

"He is," replied "Doc," "but he don't know it—yet. I'm bankin' on the fact that he won't overlook a chance to show off in public, and that Miss Wheatley is about due to get married to some one."

"I think you'd be doin' her a favor if you picked out somebody besides 'Baz,'" suggested the cold and unresponsive Woodson.

"'Baz' is the man," said "Doc" firmly. "If we've got a public character in this town it's 'Baz' Leonard. If there's a woman in town that's supposed to be out of the marryin' class, it's Miss Wheatley. Her gettin' married to any one would be about the biggest piece of news you could spring on Musselwhite. But gettin' married to 'Baz' Leonard! Say! They won't have a handful of people at their chimney-corner show. And you can bet they'll never keep Jake Francis over there to play Santa Claus. Any time that old 'Baz' gets married again, Jake'll want to be there to see it."

"I don't see how you're goin' to work it in on a Christmas Eve exhibition," said Woodson, but even as he spoke he chuckled reflectively, and it

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was evident that the beautiful possibilities of the plan were beginning to ramify his understanding.

“Simplest thing in the world,” said “Doc.” “We announce that we’re goin’ to give Miss Wheatley a Christmas present.”

“You’d better postpone the show till April 1,” suggested Mr. Hufty, and then all three committeemen leaned back in their chairs, exchanged glances, and roared with laughter. It was evident that no vote would be necessary.

“I’ve thought it all out,” continued “Doc.” “We can have the regular entertainment, then the distribution of presents. We’ll have Santy Claus bring in the marriage license and present it to ‘Baz.’ Then we’ll lead the happy couple to the altar, and after Brother King has done a scientific job of splicin’, we’ll give them their combination Christmas and weddin’ presents. The different Sunday-school classes can chip in and buy presents for them. They’ll be glad to do it.”

“It sounds all right, but can we talk ’em into it?” asked Mr. Hufty. “‘Baz’ has fooled around her a little, but I never thought he wanted to marry her.”

“I’ll guarantee to have him on hand when the time comes,” said “Doc” confidently. “I want you two fellows to have the women go after Miss Wheatley. We must take it for granted that they’re already engaged. Have the women go

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over and congratulate her, and then convince her that if she has a church weddin' she'll get a raft of presents. It's the third and last call with her, and I don't think we'll have to use blinkers or a curb bit."

And so, next day, there began the strangest campaign that ever Cupid waged by Proxy. Rumor—strong, persistent, undeniable—had it that "Baz" Leonard and Miss Beulah Wheatley were to become as one, indivisible. "United in the holy bonds of wedlock" is the way it was put by the editor of the "Courier."

Unless you, indulgent reader, have lived in a Musselwhite, you can not fully comprehend how convulsing was the excitement that laid hold upon the whole township when the story went jumping from house to house, across farm lots, over ditches, through the deep woods, until it was gleefully discussed around the lamplight as far away as Antioch and Burdett's Grove. For "Baz" Leonard was a man who had posed in the fierce light of publicity for many years. In Rome he would have been a senator. In Musselwhite he was a constable. As a war veteran, as a member of the Volunteer Fire Department, as a confirmed juror, as custodian of a bass drum, as judge of elections, as something-or-other, he contrived to be where the common run of mortals had to look at him and rather admire his self-possession and dignified bearing. To be in the foreground of activities, to be in some way con-

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nected with every event which partook of the ceremonial, this was the one gnawing ambition of Ballantyne Leonard. His front name, by some system of abbreviation known only to small towns, had been condensed to "Baz." His wife had died soon after the war. He lived in a small frame house, more thoroughly covered by mortgage than by paint. A pension and the occasional fee coming to a constable provided him with the essentials of life—tobacco and one or two other items less important. As a factor in the business life of Musselwhite he was a comparative cipher, but at public functions he shone. Take it on the Fourth of July. On a borrowed horse, with a tri-colored sash once around his waist and once over the shoulder, he led the parade. On election nights he read the returns. The job of pumping the organ in the Zion Church he refused because he could not perform his duties in view of the congregation. Every winter, when the Methodist revival had stirred the town to a high-strung fervor, he walked up the main aisle and joined the church, becoming for a few nights the nucleus of a shouting jubilation. Every summer he attended a soldiers' reunion, drank to the memory of blood-stained battlefields, and was let out of the church as a backslider. If a traveling magician or hypnotist requested "some one from the audience to kindly step upon the stage," "Baz" was always the first to respond. The happiness of his life came from

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now and then being on a pedestal. "Doc" Silvertown knew what he was talking about when he said that on Christmas Eve he would have his man on hand, ready to be married.

As for Miss Beulah Wheatley, she was a small, prim, and exceedingly antique maiden lady who looked out at the world through a pair of bull's-eye spectacles. Those whose memories extended back far enough testified that, as a girl, she had been "not bad lookin'," and they could account for her having been marooned all these years only on the cruel theory that some marry and some don't. Miss Wheatley was a pocket edition of Joan of Arc when it came to church activities, her efforts being concentrated on foreign missionary work. She was a landmark of Zion. "Doc" Silvertown once calculated that she had embroidered twenty-seven pairs of slippers for the coming and going preachers. It was known that she owned the house in which she lived, and it was vaguely rumored that she had money invested. In Musselwhite, flitting about like a lonesome and unmated bird among the satisfied and well-fed domestic pigeons, she was a pathetic joke. People respected her because she was pious and a good housekeeper, but likewise they poked fun at her, for the "old maid" is always a fair target.

No two people in Musselwhite were more surprised by the announced engagement than Mr. "Baz" Leonard and Miss Beulah Wheatley.

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“Baz” met the first congratulations with good nature, his only sensation being one of gratification that the public should be interested in his private affairs. Later on, when his denials were pooh-poohed into silence, and he was given positive proof that Miss Wheatley had been up to Babcock’s store, picking out dress goods, he became alarmed. Even this alarm was tempered by the joy of being the most-talked-about man in Musselwhite, and “Doc” Silverton never lost faith. At the first opportunity he called “Baz” into the office and gave him a long and violent handshaking. It’s somethin’ you ought to have done years ago, ‘Baz,’ ” he said, leading his visitor over to an operating chair. “She’s a fine woman, and she’s got a little property, and I don’t see that you could do better.”

“I’d like to know how them reports got started,” said “Baz.” “I ain’t seen Miss Wheatley for goin’ on six weeks, and when I did see her we didn’t talk about nothin’ except them Plymouth Rock chickens she bought from—”

“That’s all right, ‘Baz,’ ” said “Doc,” patting him on the shoulder. “You kept it quiet as long as you could, but Miss Wheatley’s a woman, you know, and she was so proud of gettin’ you away from all these widows around town, you can’t blame her for braggin’ a little. Now that it’s all settled, we’re going to give you the biggest weddin’ that was ever seen in this neck of the woods.”

Thereupon he outlined the plans for Christmas

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Eve, minimizing the fact that Miss Wheatley would be a party to the exercises, and enlarging upon the glory that would come to the groom. He told how the organ would thunder, how the church would be jammed, how the infant class would strew flowers in the pathway of the hero, and "Baz," listening, was lost.

In the meantime Mrs. Woodson and Mrs. Hufty had been working on Miss Wheatley. They did not falsify to her, but they led her to believe that Mr. Leonard had said many things that were really said by "Doc" Silverton, and they did it in such a way that the feminine conscience did not suffer a single pang. Miss Wheatley gathered, from the nature of their conversation, that they were the emissaries of the would-be groom. Certainly their assurances were emphatic, and she, as if in a dream, permitted herself to be measured for a wedding gown.

And so Miss Wheatley and "Baz" Leonard were engaged, and neither had spoken to the other a word that was even remotely suggestive of matrimony. "Doc" Silverton, past-master at politics and all manner of deep scheming, "clinched" the matter by giving a supper at the Commercial Hotel. "Baz" was present and Miss Wheatley was present and many witnesses were present. When the pie had been served, "Doc" arose and made a speech of congratulation to the couple. He referred to the undying

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splendor of Mr. Leonard's war record, his long and honorable career as a public servant, and the high esteem in which he was held by the beautiful little city of Musselwhite. It was meet and proper, said "Doc," that such a man should choose for his companion and helpmate an estimable lady whose light had never been hidden under a bushel, etc.

"Baz" and Miss Wheatley looked at each other across the celery tops, bewildered, but lacking the moral courage to arise and protest. They were being carried along on a wave of popular enthusiasm. It seemed exhilarating to Miss Wheatley. "Baz" wore an air of melancholy doubt, especially after the supper at the Commercial Hotel, when he had been given the privilege of taking a long, hard, and critical look at Miss Wheatley in her best clothes.

Word came to the committee that the groom was weakening. "Baz" had been meditating and gazing upon two pictures. One was pleasant—he at the church with a yellow rose in his coat and hundreds of people looking at him. The other was a long-drawn vista of straight and narrow matrimony under the supervision of a small but determined woman.

"I guess we'll have to call it off," he said, as he met "Doc" Silverton in front of the post-office, and he looked across the street in a guilty and shamefaced manner.

"You can't call it off," said "Doc." "You've

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announced your engagement in the presence of witnesses and we've fixed up the whole programme."

"I didn't announce it—you did."

"Well, you were present, and silence gives consent. If you try to back out now she can sue you for breach of promise."

"What'll she git?"

"I'm surprised at you, 'Baz'—after all that your friends have done for you in this thing."

"Baz" studied a display of Christmas goods in a window and rubbed his chin reflectively. Finally he said, "I ain't got any clothes that's fit to wear."

"Doc" hesitated. The committee had not undertaken to outfit the bridegroom. But he knew that the failure of his pet enterprise would fill the town with Campbellite hilarity, so he said, "We'll see that you get a new suit."

Christmas Eve came. It found Musselwhite keyed up to the highest pitch of glad expectation. Every aspiring comic in the town had exhausted his stock of inventive humor in thinking up presents to give to "Baz" and Miss Wheatley. From cardboard mottoes of satirical character to a nickel-plated kitchen stove, the gifts, large and small, were waiting behind the pulpit of the Zion Church. As many people as could elbow their way into the seats and aisles and corners of the church were waiting. Miss Wheatley, all in white, with smelling salts, also six married

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women to give her courage, waited in the pastor's study. And down the street, in a small frame house, a grizzled veteran, who had faced death on many fields of carnage, lay back on his bed and told a despairing committee that he was ill, even to the point of death, and that there could be no wedding. He had put on the new black suit. The black bow tie had been carefully balanced by Sam Woodson. "Baz" with the dull horror of impending calamity numbing his resolution, had even combed his hair, and then, when Mr. Hufty looked at his watch and said, "It's about time to start," "Baz" had been stricken.

"Where does it seem to hurt you?" asked Sam Woodson.

"All over," said "Baz," looking steadfastly at the ceiling. "I'm as weak as a kitten."

"Your pulse is all right," said "Doc" Silver-ton," "and you've got a good color. Was Freeman Wheatley over to see you to-day?"

"Baz" rolled over and looked at the wall, and then answered hesitatingly, "Yes, I seen him for a little while."

"What did he say to you?"

"He said she didn't have as much property as most people think, and that no livin' man could get along with her."

"I thought you was slick enough to see through Freeman Wheatley," said Mr. Hufty. "He wants to sidetrack this thing so he'll come into her property."

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"This is no time for foolin'," said "Doc" Silverton, arising and rolling up his sleeves. "There's nothin' the matter with 'Baz' except he's a little overheated by the pleasure of this gladsome occasion. I'll bleed him and cool him off a little and he'll be all O. K."

Saying which he produced a pocket surgical case and took out a long, glittering knife.

"Don't you go to cuttin' into me," said "Baz," sitting up in the bed.

"Then you quit this tomfoolin' and come along with us," said "Doc" sternly. "We ain't got a minute to spare."

"Baz" thereupon showed immediate improvement. With a deep sigh he stood up and they bundled him into his overcoat.

The moonlit street was quite deserted. It seemed that every one in town was waiting at the church. "Doc" Silverton walked ahead with the silent victim. Behind, Mr. Hufty and Sam Woodson executed quiet dance steps in the snow, indicative of their joy.

In front of the Gridley house "Baz" stopped. "I need a drink of water," he said. "I think it'd brace me up."

"You can get one at the church," said "Doc."

"I'd rather step in to the Gridley well here. It's the best water in town."

The committee waited at the front gate. "Baz" disappeared around the corner of the house and they heard the dry clanking of the

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iron pump and the splatter of water, and then there was silence and a pause, but no "Baz" appeared.

"Mebbe he's slipped out the back way," suggested Mr. Hufty in a frightened whisper, and the committee ran for the pump. The Gridley back yard lay quiet in the moonlight and there was neither sound nor sight of bridegroom.

"He couldn't get away so soon," said "Doc." "I don't see any tracks in the snow."

"D'you s'pose—" began Sam Woodson, looking upward, and then he pointed to where Mr. "Baz" Leonard sat in the high crotch of a cherry tree.

"This is a put-up job," said Mr. Leonard. "I'm just gettin' on to it."

"'Baz,' you're actin' like a child," began Mr. Hufty. "Come on, now; they're waitin' for you."

"Let him stay up there and freeze," said "Doc." "I'm done with him. I didn't think an old soldier would be afraid to face a crowd of people."

"I ain't afraid," said "Baz," shifting his position. "I've had the cards stacked on me, that's all."

"Go over to the church, Sam," said "Doc" Silverton, after an awkward pause. "Tell the whole crowd to come over here and take a look at the bridegroom that's gone to roost like a chicken." Sam started.

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"Don't you bring no crowd here," shouted "Baz" as he began to descend. "This is the lowest trick that was ever put up on a human bein'."

Thus ended his resistance. They led him like a lamb to the slaughter.

People in Musselwhite said it was the making of "Baz" Leonard. For years after that he walked a chalk mark and his habits seemed to improve, for he was afraid to attend a soldiers' reunion. He should have been happy, for he lived in a cottage that was spick and span, and had a capable woman to tell him what to do at every turn. And yet there were times when, at Sunday morning services, he would look across at "Doc" Silverton with a reproachful light in his eyes, as if to say, "You did this to me."

A CHRISTMAS PRESENT FOR A LADY

BY MYRA KELLY

A CHRISTMAS PRESENT FOR A LADY

BY MYRA KELLY

IT was the week before Christmas, and the First Reader Class, in a lower East Side school, had, almost to a man, decided on the gifts to be lavished on "Teacher." She was quite unprepared for any such observance on the part of her small adherents, for her first study of the roll book had shown her that its numerous Jacobs, Isidores, and Rachels belonged to a class to which Christmas Day was much as other days. And so she went serenely on her way, all unconscious of the swift and strict relation between her manner and her chances. She was, for instance, the only person in the room who did not know that her criticism of Isidore Belchatsky's hands and face cost her a tall "three for ten cents" candlestick and a plump box of candy.

But Morris Mogilewsky, whose love for Teacher was far greater than the combined loves of all the other children, had as yet no present to bestow. That his "kind feeling" should be without proof when the lesser loves of Isidore Wishnewsky, Sadie Gonorowsky, and Bertha

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Binderwitz were taking the tangible but surprising forms which were daily exhibited to his confidential gaze was more than he could bear. The knowledge saddened all his hours, and was the more maddening because it could in no wise be shared by Teacher, who noticed his altered bearing and tried with all sorts of artful beguilements to make him happy and at ease. But her efforts served only to increase his unhappiness and his love. And he loved her! Oh, how he loved her! Since first his dreading eyes had clung for a breath's space to her "like man's shoes" and had then crept timidly upward past a black skirt, a "from silk" apron, a red "jumper," and "from gold" chain to her "light face," she had been mistress of his heart of hearts. That was more than three months ago. How well he remembered the day!

His mother had washed him horribly, and had taken him into the big red schoolhouse, so familiar from the outside, but so full of unknown terrors within. After his dusty little shoes had stumbled over the threshold he had passed from ordeal to ordeal until, at last, he was torn in mute and white-faced despair from his mother's skirts.

He was then dragged through long halls and up tall stairs by a large boy, who spoke to him disdainfully as "greenie," and cautioned him as to the laying down softly and taking up gently of those poor, dusty shoes, so that his spirit was

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quite broken and his nerves were all unstrung when he was pushed into a room full of bright sunshine and of children who laughed at his frightened little face. The sunshine smote his timid eyes, the laughter smote his timid heart, and he turned to flee. But the door was shut, the large boy gone, and despair took him for its own.

Down upon the floor he dropped, and wailed, and wept, and kicked. It was then that he heard, for the first time, the voice which now he loved. A hand was forced between his aching body and the floor, and the voice said:

"Why, my dear little chap, you mustn't cry like that. What's the matter?"

The hand was gentle and the question kind, and these, combined with a faint perfume suggestive of drug stores and barber shops—but nicer than either—made him uncover his hot little face. Kneeling beside him was a lady, and he forced his eyes to that perilous ascent; from shoes to skirt, from skirt to jumper, from jumper to face, they trailed in dread uncertainty, but at the face they stopped—they had found rest.

Morris allowed himself to be gathered into the lady's arms and held upon her knee, and when his sobs no longer rent the very foundations of his pink and wide-spread tie, he answered her question in a voice as soft as his eyes, and as gently sad.

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"I ain't so big, and I don't know where is my mama."

So, having cast his troubles on the shoulders of the lady, he had added his throbbing head to the burden, and from that safe retreat had enjoyed his first day at school immensely.

Thereafter he had been the first to arrive every morning, and the last to leave every afternoon; and under the care of Teacher, his liege lady, he had grown in wisdom and love and happiness, but the greatest of these was love. And now, when the other boys and girls were planning surprises and gifts of price for Teacher, his hands were as empty as his heart was full. Appeal to his mother met with denial prompt and energetic.

"For what you go and make, over Christmas, presents? You ain't no Krisht; you should better have no kind feelings over Krishts, neither; your papa could to have a mad."

"Teacher ain't no Krisht," said Morris stoutly; "all the other fellows buys her presents, und I'm loving mit her; it's polite I gives her presents the while I'm got such a kind feeling over her."

"Well, we ain't got no money for buy nothing," said Mrs. Mogilewsky sadly. "No money, und your papa, he has all times a scare he shouldn't to get no more, the while the boss"—and here followed incomprehensible, but depressing, financial details, until the end of the interview found Morris and his mother sobbing and rocking in one another's arms. So Morris was

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helpless, his mother poor, and Teacher all unknowing.

And now the great day, the Friday before Christmas, has come, and the school is, for the first half hour, quite mad. Doors open suddenly and softly to admit small persons, clad in wondrous ways and bearing wondrous parcels. Room 18, generally so placid and so peaceful, is a howling wilderness full of brightly colored, quickly changing groups of children, all whispering, all gurgling, and all hiding queer bundles. A new-comer invariably causes a diversion; the assembled multitude, athirst for novelty, falls upon him and clamors for a glimpse of his bundle and a statement of its price.

Teacher watches in dumb amaze. What can be the matter with the children? They can't have guessed that the shrouded something in the corner is a Christmas tree? What makes them behave so queerly, and why do they look so strange? They seem to have grown stout in a single night, and Teacher, as she notes this, marvels greatly. The explanation is simple, though it comes in alarming form. The sounds of revelry are pierced by a long, shrill yell, and a pair of agitated legs spring suddenly into view between two desks. Teacher, rushing to the rescue, notes that the legs form the unsteady stem of an upturned mushroom of brown flannel and green braid, which she recognizes as the outward seem-

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ing of her cherished Bertha Binderwitz; and yet, when the desks are forced to disgorge their prey, the legs restored to their normal position are found to support a fat child—and Bertha was best described as “skinny”—in a dress of the Stuart tartan tastefully trimmed with purple. Investigation proves that Bertha’s accumulative taste in dress is an established custom. In nearly all cases the glory of holiday attire is hung upon the solid foundation of every-day clothes as bunting is hung upon a building. The habit is economical of time, and produces a charming embonpoint.

Teacher, too, is more beautiful than ever. Her dress is blue, and “very long down, like a lady,” with bands of silk and scraps of lace distributed with the eye of art. In her hair she wears a bow of what Sadie Gonorowsky, whose father “works by fancy goods,” describes as “black from plush ribbon—costs ten cents.”

Isidore Belchatosky, relenting, is the first to lay tribute before Teacher. He comes forward with a sweet smile and a tall candlestick—the candy has gone to its long home—and Teacher for a moment can not be made to understand that all that length of bluish-white china is really hers “for keeps.”

“It’s to-morrow holiday,” Isidore assures her; “and we gives you presents, the while we have a kind feeling. Candlesticks could to cost twenty-five cents.”

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"It's a lie. Three for ten," says a voice in the background, but Teacher hastens to respond to Isidore's test of her credulity:

"Indeed, they could. This candlestick could have cost fifty cents, and it's just what I want. It is very good of you to bring me a present."

"You're welcome," says Isidore, retiring; and then the ice being broken, the First Reader Class in a body rises to cast its gifts on Teacher's desk, and its arms round Teacher's neck.

Nathan Horowitz presents a small cup and saucer; Isidore Applebaum bestows a large calendar for the year before last; Sadie Gonorowsky brings a basket containing a bottle of perfume, a thimble, and a bright silk handkerchief; Sarah Schodsky offers a penwiper and a yellow celluloid collar-button, and Eva Kidansky gives an elaborate nasal douche, under the pleasing delusion that it is an atomizer.

Once more sounds of grief reach Teacher's ears. Rushing again to the rescue, she throws open the door and comes upon woe personified. Eva Gonorowsky, her hair in wildest disarray, her stocking fouled, ungartered, and down-gyved to her ankle, appears before her teacher. She bears all the marks of Hamlet's excitement, and many more, including a tear-stained little face and a gilt saucer clasped to a panting breast.

"Eva, my dearest Eva, what's happened to you *now*?" asks Teacher, for the list of ill chances which have befallen this one of her charges is

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very long. And Eva wails forth that a boy, a very big boy, had stolen her golden cup "what I had for you by present," and has left her only the saucer and her undying love to bestow.

Before Eva's sobs have quite yielded to Teacher's arts, Jacob Spitsky presses forward with a tortoise-shell comb of terrifying aspect and hungry teeth, and an air showing forth a determination to adjust it in its destined place. Teacher meekly bows her head; Jacob forces his offering into her long-suffering hair, and then retires with the information, "Costs fifteen cents, Teacher," and the courteous phrase—by etiquette prescribed—"Wish you health to wear it."

Here a big boy, a very big boy, enters hastily. He does not belong to Room 18, but he has long known Teacher. He has brought her a present; he wishes her a merry Christmas. The present, when produced, proves to be a pretty gold cup, and Eva Gonorowsky, with renewed emotion, recognizes the boy as her assailant and the cup as her property. Teacher is dreadfully embarrassed; the boy not at all so. His policy is simple and entire denial, and in this he perseveres, even after Eva's saucer has unmistakably proclaimed its relationship to the cup.

Meanwhile the rush of presentation goes steadily on. Other cups and saucers come in wild profusion. The desk is covered with them, and their wrappings of purple tissue paper require a monitor's whole attention. The soap,

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too, becomes urgently perceptible. It is of all sizes, shapes, and colors, but of uniform and dreadful power of perfume. No other teacher has so many helps to the toilet. None other is so beloved.

Teacher's aspect is quite changed, and the "blue long down like a lady dress" is almost hidden by the offerings she has received. Jacob's comb has two massive and bejeweled rivals in the "softy hair." The front of the dress, where aching or despondent heads are wont to rest, is glittering with campaign buttons of American celebrities, beginning with James G. Blaine and extending into modern history as far as Patrick Divver, Admiral Dewey, and Captain Dreyfus. Outside the blue belt is a white one, nearly clean, and bearing in "sure 'nough golden words" the curt, but stirring, invitation, "Remember the Maine." Around the neck are three chaplets of beads, wrought by chubby fingers and embodying much love, while the waist-line is further adorned by tiny and beribboned aprons. Truly, it is a day of triumph.

When the waste-paper basket has been twice filled with wrappings and twice emptied; when order is emerging out of chaos; when the Christmas tree has been disclosed and its treasures distributed, a timid hand is laid on Teacher's knee and a plaintive voice whispers, "Say, Teacher, I got something for you"; and Teacher turns quickly to see Morris, her dearest boy charge,

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with his poor little body showing quite plainly between his shirtwaist buttons and through the gashes he calls pockets. This is his ordinary costume, and the funds of the house of Mogilewsky are evidently unequal to an outer layer of finery.

"Now, Morris, dear," says Teacher, "you shouldn't have troubled to get me a present; you know you and I are such goods friends that—"

"Teacher, yis, ma'am," Morris interrupts, in a bewitching rising inflection of his soft and plaintive voice; I know you got a kind feeling by me, and I couldn't to tell even how I'm got a kind feeling by you. Only it's about that kind feeling I should give you a present. I didn't"—with a glance at the crowded desk—"I didn't to have no soap nor no perfumery, and my mama, she couldn't to buy none by the store; but, Teacher, I'm got something awful nice for you by present."

"And what is it, deary?" asks the already rich and gifted young person. "What is my new present?"

"Teacher, it's like this: I don't know; I ain't so big like I could to know"—and, truly, God pity him! he is passing small—"It ain't for boys—it's for ladies. Over yesterday on the night comes my papa on my house, and he gives my mama the present. Sooner she looks on it, sooner she has a awful glad; in her eye stands tears, und she says, like that—out of Jewish—'Thanks,' un' she kisses my papa a kiss. Und my papa, *how* he

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is polite! he says—out of Jewish, too—‘You’re welcome, all right,’ un’ he kisses my mama a kiss. So my mama, she sets and looks on the present, und all the time she looks she has a glad over it. Und I didn’t to have no soap, so you could to have the present.”

“But did your mother say I might?”

“Teacher, no ma’am; she didn’t say like that un’ she didn’t to say *not* like that. She didn’t to know. But it’s for ladies, un’ I didn’t to have no soap. You could to look on it. It ain’t for boys.”

And here Morris opens a hot little hand and discloses a tightly-folded pinkish paper. As Teacher reads it he watches her with eager, furtive eyes, dry and bright, until hers grow suddenly moist, when his promptly follow suit. As she looks down at him, he makes his moan once more:

“It’s for ladies, und I didn’t to have no soap.”

“But, Morris, dear,” cries Teacher unsteadily, laughing a little, and yet not far from tears, “this is ever so much nicer than soap—a thousand times better than perfume; and you’re quite right, it is for ladies, and I never had one in all my life before. I am so very thankful.”

“You’re welcome, all right. That’s how my papa says; it’s polite,” says Morris proudly. And proudly he takes his place among the very little boys, and loudly he joins in the ensuing song. For the rest of that exciting day he is a

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shining point of virtue in a slightly confused class. And at three o'clock he is at Teacher's desk again, carrying on the conversation as if there had been no interruption.

"Und my mama," he says insinuatingly—"she kisses my papa a kiss."

"Well?" says Teacher.

"Well," says Morris, "you ain't never kissed me a kiss, und I seen how you kissed Eva Gonowsky. I'm loving mit you too. Why don't you never kiss me a kiss?"

"Perhaps," suggests Teacher mischievously, "perhaps it ain't for boys."

But a glance at her "light face," with its crown of surprising combs, reassures him.

"Teacher, yis, ma'am; it's for boys," he cries as he feels her arms about him, and sees that in her eyes, too, "stands tears."

"It's polite you kisses me a kiss over that for ladies' present."

Late that night Teacher sat in her pretty room—for she was, unofficially, a great pampered young person—and reviewed her treasures. She saw that they were very numerous, very touching, very whimsical, and very precious. But above all the rest she cherished a frayed pinkish paper, rather crumpled and a little soiled. For it held the love of a man and woman and a little child, and the magic of a home, for Morris Mogilewsky's Christmas present for ladies was the receipt for a month's rent for a room on the top floor of a Monroe Street tenement.

AGAINST HIS JUDGMENT

BY ROBERT GRANT

AGAINST HIS JUDGMENT

BY ROBERT GRANT

THREE days had passed, and the excitement in the neighborhood was nearly at an end. The apothecary's shop at the corner into which John Baker's body and the living four-year-old child had been carried together immediately after the catastrophe had lost most of its interest for the curious, although the noses of a few idlers were still pressed against the large pane in apparent search of something beyond the brilliant colored bottles or the soda-water fountains. Now that the funeral was over, the womenkind whose windows commanded a view of the house where the dead man had been lying had taken their heads in and resumed their sweeping and washing, and knots of their husbands and fathers no longer stood in gaping conclave close to the very door-sill, rehearsing again and again the details of the distressing incident. Even the little child that had been so miraculously saved from the jaws of death, although still decked in the dirty finery which its mother deemed appropriate to its having suddenly become a public character, was beginning to fall

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into obscurity and to cease to be the recipient of the dimes of the tender-hearted. Curiously enough, such is the capriciousness of the human temperament at times of emotional excitement, the plan of a subscription for the victim's family had not been mooted until what was to its parents a small fortune had been bestowed on the rescued child; but the scale of justice had gradually righted itself, and contributions were now pouring in, especially since it was known that the mayor and several other well-known persons had headed the list with subscriptions of fifty dollars each; and there was reason to believe that a lump sum of from fifteen hundred to two thousand dollars would be collected for the benefit of the widow and seven children before the public generosity was exhausted.

Local interest was on the wane; but, thanks to the telegraph and the press, the facts were being disseminated through the country, and every leading newspaper in the land was chronicling, with more or less periphrasis according to the character of its patrons, the item that John Baker, the gatekeeper, at a railroad crossing in a Pennsylvania city, had snatched a toddling child from the pathway of a swiftly moving locomotive and been crushed to death.

A few days later a dinner company of eight was gathered at a country-house several hundred miles distant from the scene of the calamity. The host and hostess were people of wealth

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and leisure, who enjoyed inviting congenial parties from their social acquaintance in the neighboring city to share with them for two or three days at a time the charms of nature. The dinner was appetizing and the wine good, and all present were engaged in that gracious unbending of self which ordinarily follows the action of refreshment and light on minds under the influence of pleasant impressions.

In a tavern the best result is joviality; at the dinner-table of intelligent gentlefolk—and of such we are speaking—the texture of the most agreeable conversation, though smooth as the choicest Lafitte and sparkling as champagne, has ever a thread of seriousness in the woof.

They had talked on a variety of topics: of the climate and landscape of Florida, where two of the party had sojourned during the winter months; of amateur photography, in which the hostess was proficient; of the very general use in common parlance of “don’t” for “doesn’t” and “but what” for “but that”; of Mrs. Langtry’s beauty before she became an actress, concerning which one of the gentlemen who had met her in London was very eloquent; of some recent pictures and publications; of the impropriety and the increasing custom of feeing employees to do their duty; and of certain breaches of trust by bank officers and treasurers that, happening within a short time of one another, had startled the sensibilities of the community. This last

subject begot a somewhat doleful train of commentary from two or three of the company, complaints of a too easy-going standard of morality, of a willingness not to be severe on anybody and to pass over lightly faults that our forefathers never would have condoned, of the decay of ideal considerations, and of the lack of enthusiasm for all but money-spinning among the rank and file of the people.

"The gist is here," reiterated in substance one of the speakers: "we insist upon tangible proof of everything, of being able to see and feel it—to get our dollar's worth, in short. We weigh and measure and scrutinize, and discard as fusty and outworn, conduct and guides to conduct that do not promise six per cent per annum in full sight."

"What have you to say to John Baker?" said mine host, breaking the pause that followed these remarks. "I take it for granted that you are all familiar with his story: the newspapers have been full of it. *There* was a man who did not stop to measure or scrutinize."

A murmur of approbation followed, which was interrupted by Mrs. Caspar Green, a stout and rather languid lady, inquiring to whom he referred. "You know I never read the newspapers," she added, with a decidedly superior air, putting up her eyeglass.

"Except the deaths and marriages," exclaimed her husband, a lynx-eyed little stock-broker, who

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was perpetually poking what he called fun at his more ponderous half.

“Well, this was a death: so there was no excuse for her not seeing it,” said Henry Lawford, the host. “No, seriously, Mrs. Green, it was a splendid instance of personal heroism: a gate-keeper at a railway crossing in Pennsylvania, perceiving a child of four on the track just in front of the fast express, rushed forward and managed to snatch up the little creature and deposit it on one side before—poor fellow!—he was struck and killed. There was no suggestion of counting upon six per cent there, was there?”

“Unless in another sphere,” interjected Caspar Green.

“Don’t be sacrilegious, Caspar,” pleaded his wife, though she added her mite to the ripple of laughter that greeted the sally.

“It was superb!—superb!” exclaimed Miss Ann Newbury, a young woman not far from thirty, with a long neck and a high-bred, pale, intellectual face. “He is one of the men who make us proud of being men and women.” She spoke with sententious earnestness and looked across the table appealingly at George Gorham.

“He left seven children, I believe?” said he, with precision.

“Yes, seven, Mr. Gorham—the eldest eleven,” answered Mrs. Lawford, who was herself the mother of five. “Poor little things!”

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"I think he made a great mistake," remarked George, laconically.

For an instant there was a hiatus. The company was evidently making sure that it had understood his speech correctly. Then Miss Newbury gave a gasp, and Henry Lawford, with a certain stern dignity that he knew how to assume, said:

"A mistake? How so, pray?"

"In doing what he did—sacrificing his life to save the child."

"Why, Mr. Gorham!" exclaimed the hostess, while everybody turned toward him. He was a young man between thirty and thirty-five, a lawyer beginning to be well thought of in his profession, with a thoughtful, pleasant expression and a vigorous physique.

"It seems to me," he continued, slowly, seeking his words, "if John Baker had stopped to think, he would have acted differently. To be sure, he saved the life of an innocent child; but, on the other hand, he robbed of their sole means of support seven other no less innocent children, and their mother. He was a brave man, I agree; but I, for one, should have admired him more if he had stopped to think."

"And let the child be killed?" exclaimed Mr. Carter, the gentleman who had deplored so earnestly the decay of ideal considerations. He was a young mill-treasurer, with aristocratic tendencies and a strong interest in church affairs.

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"Yes, if needs be. It was in danger through no fault of his. Its natural guardians had neglected it."

"What a frightful view to take!" murmured Mrs. Green; and, although she was very well acquainted with George Gorham's physiognomy, she examined him disapprovingly through her glass, as if there must be something compromising about it that had hitherto escaped detection.

"Well, I don't agree with you at all," said the host, emphatically.

"Nor I," said Mr. Carter.

"Nor I, Mr. Gorham," said Mrs. Lawford, so plaintively as to convey the impression that if a woman as ready as she to accept new points of view abandoned him there could be no chance of his being right.

"No, you're all wrong, my dear fellow," said Caspar Green. "Such ideas may go down among your long-haired artistic and literary friends at the Argonaut Club, but you can't expect civilized Christians to accept them. Why, man, it's monstrous--monstrous, by Jove!--to depreciate that noble fellow's action--a man that we all ought to be proud of, as Miss Newbury says. If we don't encourage such people, how can we expect them to be willing to risk their lives?" Thereupon the little broker, as a relief to his outraged feelings, emptied his champagne glass at a draught and scowled irascibly. His jesting

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equanimity was rarely disturbed; consequently, everybody felt the importance of his testimony.

"I'm sorry to be so completely in the minority," said Gorham, "but that's the way the matter strikes me. I don't think you quite catch my point, though, Caspar," he added, glancing at Mr. Green. At a less heated moment the company, with the possible exception of Mrs. Green, might have tacitly agreed that this was extremely probable; but now Miss Newbury, who had hitherto refrained from comment in order to digest the problem thoroughly before speaking, came to the broker's aid.

"It seems to me, Mr. Gorham," she said, "that your proposition is a very plain one: you claim simply that John Baker had better not have saved the child if in order to do so it was necessary to lose his own life."

"Precisely," exclaimed Mr. Green, in a tone of some contempt.

"Was not Mr. Gorham's meaning that, though it required very great courage to do what Baker did, a man who stopped to think of his own wife and children would have shown even greater courage in restraining his impulse to save the child?" asked Miss Emily Vincent. She was the youngest of the party, a beautiful girl, of fine presence, with a round face, dark eyes, and brilliant pink-and-white coloring. She had been invited to stay by the Lawfords because George Gorham was attentive to her; or, more properly

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speaking, George Gorham had been asked because he was attentive to her.

"Thank you, Miss Vincent: you have expressed my meaning perfectly," said Gorham; and his face gladdened. He was dead in love with her, and this was the first civil word, so to speak, that she had said to him during the visit.

"Do you agree with him?" inquired Miss Newbury, with intellectual sternness.

"And do you agree with Mr. Gorham?" asked Mrs. Lawford, at the same moment, caressingly.

All eyes were turned on Emily Vincent, and she let hers fall confusedly. She felt that she would have given worlds not to have spoken. Why had she spoken?

"I understand what he means; but I don't believe a man in John Baker's place could help himself," she said, quietly.

"Of course he couldn't!" cried Mrs. Lawford. "There, Mr. Gorham, you have lost your champion. What have you to say now?" A murmur of approval went round the table.

"I appreciate my loss, but I fear I have nothing to add to what has been said already," he replied, with smiling firmness. "Although in a pitiful minority, I shall have to stand or fall by that."

"Ah, but when it came to action we know that under all circumstances Mr. Gorham would be his father's son," said Mrs. Lawford, with less than her usual tact, though she intended to be

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very ingratiating. Gorham's father had been killed in the Civil War, after having become conspicuous for gallantry.

Gorham bowed a little stiffly, feeling that there was nothing for him to say. There was a pause, evincing that the topic was getting threadbare, which prompted the host to anticipate Mr. Carter, who, having caught Miss Newbury's eye, was about to philosophize further on the same lines, by calling his wife's attention to the fact that one of the candles was flaring. This turned the current of conversation, and the subject was not alluded to again.

During the twelve months following his visit at the Lawfords' the attentions of George Gorham to Emily began to be noticeable. He had loved her for three years in secret; but the consciousness that he was not able to support a wife had hindered him from devoting himself pronouncedly to her. He knew that she, or rather her father, had considerable property; but Gorham was not willing to take this into consideration; he would never offer himself until his own income was sufficient for both their needs. But, on the other hand, his ideas of a sufficient income were not extravagant. He looked forward to building a comfortable little house in the suburbs in the midst of a few acres of garden and lawn, so that his neighbors' windows need not overlook his domesticity. He would have a horse and buggy wherewith to drive his wife through the

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country on summer afternoons, and later, if his bank-account warranted it, a saddle-horse for Emily and one for himself. He would keep open house in the sense of encouraging his friends to visit him; and, that they might like to come, he would have a thoroughly good plain cook—thereby eschewing French kickshaws—and his parlor and his own snuggerly should afford the best new books, and on the walls etchings and sketches winsome to the eye, done by men who were rising rather than men who had risen. There should be no formality; his guests should do what they pleased and wear what they pleased, and, above all, they should become intimate with his wife, instead of merely tolerating her after the manner of the bachelor friends of so many other men.

Thus he had been in the habit of depicting to himself the future as he would have it be, and at last, by dint of strict undeviating attention to his business, he had got to the point where he could afford to realize his project if his lady-love were willing. His practice was increasing steadily, and he had laid by a few thousand dollars to meet any unexpected emergency. His life was insured for fifty thousand dollars, and the policy was now ten years old. He had every reason to expect that in course of time as the older lawyers died off he would either succeed to the lucrative conduct of large suits or be made a judge of one of the higher tribunals. In this

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manner his ambition would be amply satisfied. His aim was to progress slowly but solidly, without splurge or notoriety, until every one came to regard him tacitly as a man of sound dispassionate judgment, keen understanding, and simple, earnest life. His especial antipathy was for so-called cranks, people who went off at half-cock, who thought nothing out, but were governed by the impulse of the moment, shilly-shally and controlled by unmasculine sentimentality.

It was with hope and yet with his heart in his mouth that he set out one afternoon determined to ask Emily Vincent to become his wife. She lived in the suburbs, within fifteen miles by the train, or an hour's walk from town. Gorham took the cars. It was a beautiful day, almost the counterpart of that which they had passed together at the Lawfords' just a year before. As he sat in the train he analyzed the situation once more for the hundredth time, taking care not to give himself the advantage of any ambiguous symptoms. Certainly she was not indifferent to him; she accepted his attentions without demur, and seemed interested in his interests. But was that love? Was it any more than esteem or cordial liking that would turn to pity at the first hint of affection on his part? But surely she could not plead ignorance of his intentions; she must long ere this have realized that he was seriously attentive to her. Still, girls were strange creatures. He could not help feeling nervous,

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because so very much was involved for him in the result. Should she refuse him, he would be and remain for a long time excessively unhappy. He obliged himself to regard that alternative, and his heart sank before the possibility of its coming to pass. Not that the idea of dying or doing anything desperate presented itself to him. Such extravagance would have seemed out of keeping with respect either for her or for himself. Doubtless he might recover some day, but the interim would be terribly hard to endure. Rejection meant a dark, dreary bachelorhood; success, the crowning of his dearest hopes.

He found his sweetheart at home, and she came down to greet him with roses that he had sent her in her bosom. It was not easy for him to do or say anything extravagant, and Emily Vincent, while she might have pardoned unseemly effusiveness to his exceeding love for her, was well content with the deeply earnest though unriotous expression of his passion. When finally he had folded her in his arms she felt that the greatest happiness existence can give was hers, and he knew himself to be an utterly blissful lover.

The news was broken to her family that evening, and received delightedly, though without the surprise the lovers had expected. They were left alone for a little while before the hour of parting, and in the sweet kisses given and taken Gorham redeemed himself in his mistress's esti-

mation for any lack of folly he had been guilty of when he had asked her to be his wife. There was riot now in his eyes and in his embraces, revealing that he had needed only to be sure of her encouragement to become as ridiculous as she could desire. He stood disclosed to himself in a new light; and when he had kissed her once more for the last time he went tripping down the lawn radiantly happy, turning now and again to throw back with his fingers a message from his lips to the one being in all the world for him who stood on the threshold, adding poetry and symmetry to the beautiful June evening.

When out of sight of the house, Gorham sped fleetly along the road. He intended to walk to town, for he felt like glorying in his happiness under the full moon which was shedding her silver light from a clear heaven. The air was not oppressive, and it was scented with the perfume of the lilacs and apple-blossoms, so that Gorham was fain every now and then to draw a deep breath in order to inhale their fragrance. There was no dust, and nature looked spruce and trig, without a taint of the frowziness that is observable in the foliage a month later.

Gorham took very little notice of the details; his eyes were busy rather with mind-problems than with the particular beauties of the night; yet his rapt gaze swept the brilliant heaven as though he felt its lustre to be in harmony with the radiance in his own soul. He was imagining the future—

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his hearth forever blessed by her sweet presence, their mutual joys and sorrows sweetened and alleviated through being shared, his efforts to live a life in accord with the highest intimations of his being, fortified by her example and counsel. How the pleasures of walking and riding and reading and traveling—of everything, in fact—would be a hundredfold enhanced by being able to interchange impressions with each other! He pictured to himself the cosy evenings they would pass at home beside the lamp when the day's work was done, and the jolly trips they would take together when vacation time arrived. How he would watch over her, and how he would guard her and tend her and comfort her if misfortune came or ill health assailed her! There would be little ones, perhaps, to claim their joint devotion and bid him redouble his energies; he smiled at the thought of baby fingers about his neck, and there arose to his mind's eyes a sweet vision of Emily sitting, pale but triumphant, rocking her new-born child upon her breast.

He walked swiftly on the wings of transport. It was almost as light as day, yet he met but few travelers along the country road. An occasional vehicle passed him, breaking the silvery stillness with its rumble that subsided at last into the distance. A pair of whispering lovers, arm in arm, who slunk into the shadow as he came abreast of them, won from him a glance of sympathy, and just after he had left them behind the shrill

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whistle of a locomotive jarring upon the silence seemed to bring him a message from the woman he adored. Had he not preferred to walk, that was the train he would have taken, and it must have stopped not many hundred yards from her door. He breathed a prayer of blessing on her rest as he listened to it thundering past almost parallel to him in the cut below.

A little beyond this point the road curved and ran with gradual incline so as to cross the railroad track at grade about half a mile further on. This stretch of road was lined on each side by horse-chestnut trees set near to one another, the spreading foliage of which darkened the graveled footpath, so that Gorham, who was enjoying the moonlight, preferred to keep in the middle of the road, which, by way of contrast, gleamed almost like a river. He was pursuing his way with elastic steps, when of a sudden his attention was arrested about a hundred and fifty yards from the crossing by something lying at the foot of one of the trees on the right-hand side. At a second glance he saw that it was a woman's figure. Probably she was asleep: but she might be ill or injured. It was a lonely spot: so it occurred to him that it was proper for him to ascertain which. Accordingly he stepped to her side and bent over her. From her calico dress, which was her only covering, she evidently belonged to the laboring class. She was a large, coarse-looking woman, and was lying, in what

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appeared to Gorham to be drunken slumber, on her bonnet, the draggled strings of which protruded. He hesitated a moment, and then shook her by the arm. She groaned boozily, but after he had shaken her again two or three times she rolled over and raised herself on her elbow, rubbing her eyes and staring at him glassily.

"Are you hurt, woman?" he asked.

She made a guttural response which might have meant anything, but she proved that she was uninjured by getting on her feet. She stared at her disturber bewilderedly, then, perceiving her bonnet, stooped to pick it up, and stood for a moment trying sleepily to poke it into shape and readjust its tawdry plumage. But all of a sudden she gave a start and began looking around her with recovered energy. She missed something, evidently. Gorham followed the direction of her gaze as it shifted, and as his glance met the line of the road he perceived a little figure standing in the middle of the railway crossing. It was a child—her child, without doubt—and as he said so to himself the roar of an approaching train, coupled with the sound of the whistle, made him start with horror. The late express from town was due. Gorham remembered that there was a considerable curve in the railroad at this point. The woman had not perceived the situation—she was too far in the shade—but Gorham from where he stood commanded a clear view of the track.

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Without an instant's hesitation, he sprang forward and ran at full speed. His first thought was that the train was very near. He ran with all his might and main, his eyes fixed on the little white figure and shouting to warn it of its danger. Suddenly there flashed before his mind with vividness the remembrance of John Baker, and he recalled his argument at the Lawfords'. But he did not abate his speed. The child had plumped itself down on one of the sleepers, and was apparently playing with some pebbles. It was on the further track, and, startled by his cries and by the clang of the approaching train, looked up at him. He saw a pale, besmeared little countenance; he heard behind him the agonizing screams of the mother, who had realized her baby's peril; in his ears rang the shrill warning of the engineer as the engine rounded the curve. Would he be in time?

As he reached the edge of the tracks, thought of Emily and a terrible consciousness of the sorrow she would feel if anything were to happen to him compressed his heart. But he did not falter. He was aware of the jangle of a fiercely rung bell, the hiss of steam, and a blinding glare; he could feel on his cheek the breath of the iron monster. With set teeth he threw himself forward, stooped, and reached out over the rail: in another instant he had tossed the child from the pathway of danger, and he himself had been mangled to death by the powerful engine.

PURPLE-EYES

BY JOHN LUTHER LONG

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I—THE FEVER JAPONICA

GARLAND was charmed with his reception. Before he could open his head (in his own perhaps too picturesque phrase) the two girls had buried their delightful noses in the mats, and were bobbing vividly up and down, sibilating honorifics at him in the voice and manner used only to personages. The mother joined them an instant later, making a phalanx; and she was nearly as beautiful, and quite as graceful, as her daughters. So that at one moment he would have presented to him the napes of three pretty necks, and at the next, with a conjurer's quick change, three pairs of eyes that smiled always, and three mouths that did their best (which was very well indeed) to assist the eyes. At first, I say, he was charmed, then a little bewildered, then bewitched. And perhaps it was well that his conversation-book was the only thing about him that spoke Japanese; for Garland's vocabulary, even when it was fairly accurate, had grown indiscreet since coming to Japan.

From "Madame Butterfly," copyright, 1898, by The Century Co.

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He perceived, however, by a surreptitious glance at the conversation-book when the napes of the necks were in view, that they were addressing him as "Augustness" and "Excellency," and that the mother was insisting that he should take immediate possession of her "miserable" house and its contents. He wondered dreamily—and he drifted into dreams with the most curious ease—whether the girls would be included.

Finally he began to feel it his duty to be tired of this fawning, as his refluent American democracy insisted upon naming it—though, personally, he liked it—and all the clever pretences of the Japanese. He sat bolt upright and frowned. But the charming kotowing did not in the least abate. He had heard somewhere that the only way to stop this sort of thing short of apoplexy was to compete in it.

He tried to reach the mats with his own nose. It seemed easy, but it was a disaster. There is a trick in it. He plunged forward helplessly almost into the lap of one of his hostesses. Garland sat up, with their joint assistance, very red in the face, but quite cheerful; for though the mother looked greatly pained, the girls were smiling like two Japanese angels. (The phrase is again Garland's: there are no Japanese angels.) Garland had the instant intelligence to perceive that this had at once stopped the kotowing, and precipitated a piquant intimacy.

"I say," said he, idiomatically, "I nearly broke

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my neck trying to say howdy-do in your way. Now won't you kindly say it in mine, without the least danger to life and limb?"

He held out his hand invitingly, and the one on his right went into debate as to which one to give him. She knew there was some foreign etiquette in the matter.

"In doubt, shake both," said Garland, doing it.

The one on his left emulated her sister to the last particular (the mother had retired for refreshments), but he noticed that the hands she gave him were long and white. He glanced up, and found himself looking into a pair of blue eyes. He followed the forehead to the brassy hair above. Then he began furiously to turn the leaves of the conversation-book. The one on his right laughed a little, and said:

"What you lig as', please?"

Garland closed the book, and stared. He did not ask what he had meant to, because of something he saw in the questioner's face.

"Ah, if you lig more bedder for do so, speak the English," she said, with a quiet flourish that was lost upon Garland.

He flung the conversation-book into a corner. Black-Eyes, as he had mentally named her, in despair of her Japanese name, which was Meadowsweet, smiled ecstatically.

"Ah-h-h! You lig those—those English?"

"Like it? It's heavenly! I say, fancy, if you can—but you can't—depending upon a diction-

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ary for your most sacred sentiments for three months."

Wherein it will be perceived that Garland had learned the whole art of Japanese politeness—gentle prevarication.

"*How* that is nize!" breathed the blue-eyed one, fervently.

Garland turned suddenly upon her, then questioned her with his eyes. She understood.

"Those—thing—you—speak-ing," she barely breathed once more, in explanation.

"Oh!" said Garland. But it meant more than print can express. "Tell me, if you please, what your name is."

It was Miss Purple-Wistaria; but the Japanese of this was quite as impossible as the other.

"Do you mind me calling you Blue-Eyes?" asked Garland. "When it comes to Japanese proper names—I have already taken the liberty of mentally calling your sister Black-Eyes, and if you don't mind—"

"You call those blue-eye?" asked Miss Meadowsweet.

"Why, yes," said Garland. "What do you call them?"

"Purple-eye."

"Well, I like that better, anyhow. It shall be Purple-Eyes."

"She got other already English name," confided Black-Eyes, with the manner for her sister he did not like.

PURPLE-EYES

"Oh! What is it?"

"Sarann," laughed the dark one. "Tha' 's jus' joke her fadder. He all times joke upon her."

Garland did not quite understand. He decided that he did not wish to, for the blue-eyed one looked very uncomfortable.

"I shall call her Purple-Eyes," he said.

The disagreeableness of the other continued.

"Yaes: tha' 's good name—for her," she added, with an intention that was distinctly odious.

"In America that would be the most beautiful name a man could give a beautiful woman," said Garland, severely.

The dark one looked a bit frightened. The blonde one gave him the merest horizon of her eyes as she raised her head. Gratitude was in them.

"Now, won't you go on, and tell me how you knew me before I opened my blooming head?"

He had again addressed himself to Purple-Eyes, but Black-Eyes answered:

"What is that—open you' head, an' blooming you' head?"

Garland informed her.

"Oh-h-h!" laughed the dark one. "*Tha' 's way know yo' 'fore open you' bloom-ing head!*"

She suddenly reached into the bosom of the kimono of the blue-eyed one, and brought forth a photograph of Garland; whereat Garland got red again, and again the blue-eyed one drooped her head.

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"Oh, I say," Garland began, without a very distinct idea of what he was going to say, "Brownie sent you that—aha, ha, ha!"—he had happily drifted into the very thing—"and wrote you that I would arrive with a letter from him; so that you would know me—you know; and of course when I arrived—of course when I arrived—why, of *course*—oh, hang it!"

They both waited breathlessly upon his words.

"Of course," echoed Black-Eyes, sympathically—"of course—tha' 's correc', an' tha' 's also—*nize*. Of course—you arrive when you arrive."

Garland wondered whether she was guying him.

"Yes—why, of course," said he once more, and a laugh *en masse* cleared the air.

Garland, in a panic, was searching his pockets.

"What lot pockets!" sighed Black-Eyes, insidiously desiring to compose his nerves.

"Sixteen," admitted Garland. "I wish they were only one, just now. By Jove, I've lost that letter!"

The graceful mother arrived with the tobacco *bon* (there appeared to be no servant), and Garland, professing an ignorance which seems problematical after three months in Japan, desired to be initiated into the art and mystery of the Japanese pipe. The tender was made to Purple-Eyes, but Black-Eyes undertook it.

"*So*," she said, rolling a pellet of the tobacco, and putting it into the pipe; "an' *so*," as she fear-

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lessly put a live coal upon it with her fingers; "so," as she put it to her own lips and sent out a tiny puff; "an'—an'—an' so!" as she laughed and put it to his. And yet Garland found himself wishing that the other one had done it, and believing that she could do it better! And this, you perceive, was already perilous business.

It was afternoon when Garland arrived, and the mother's actions, though covered by diplomatic entrances and exits, with a view to impressing him to the contrary, indicated to him that she was cooking. And presently Purple-Eyes got up and lighted the *andon*. Garland, who delighted in her grace of motion, had not yet learned that each movement was the result of much study and the practice of many stoical rules of decorum. However, he rose as far as his knees, and said he must go. A glance of alarm passed between the girls, and both stiffened in consternation.

"Sa-ay—tha' 's not nize for us," accused the dark one, with valor. "Brownie he write unto us that you so kine with him, you give him you' las' pair boots, an' go naked on you' both feet. Tha' 's way we got do you. *But*—account you go'n' go 'way, we can not. Hence we got be always 'shamed 'fore Brownie—an' *aeverybody*. Tha' 's not nize—for us." Garland had not risen above his knees, and she came hopefully forward. "Please don' go 'way!" She turned to Purple-Eyes in the peremptory way that

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Garland resented. "Sa-ay—why *you* don' as' him stay among us? Sa-ay—don' you wish?"

Garland's eyes followed. Unconsciously they besought her.

"We *lig* — if you stay — among us," said Purple-Eyes, haltingly.

But there was something else—just the timid lifting of an eyelid. Garland answered this with a rift of pleasure which shot across his face.

"Me? *I* lig also if you stay among us—I."

But now it was spoken to the mats. There was the edge of a smile visible, nevertheless, and Garland felt the courage it took for this.

"Well, if *you* like," said Garland—he laughed suddenly—"I like too."

"Thangs!"

They both said it at once; but some splendid reward passed from Purple-Eyes to Garland.

So presently they had a feast, in which four little tables stood in a circle—one for each. There would have been only three had not Garland insisted that the mother should dine with them. He had not the least idea how fearfully he had disarranged domestic matters, for the mother, of course, instantly did as he requested. And then the three of them served him, and cunningly joined in engaging him while one or the other prepared the viands. But finally it was a very joyous meal; and only when the Osaka beer came on did Garland at all suspect how much

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out of the ordinary it was for them. They had forgotten to be taught how to open the bottles!

II—THE SHADOW OF THE SHOJI

And he went to sleep that night, when sleep came, on a floor that was as dainty as any bed, in a huge wadded overcoat called a *futon*, on a wooden pillow that rocked and screeched a little (as if afraid to screech more) when he turned. An *andon* burned dimly behind a screen, and he was aware of the slumberous aroma Japonica, as he characterized it. But he could not sleep—of course not. For, less than six feet away, behind the translucent walls of paper, he could hear the melodious dithyrambs of the three voices. He could catch a sleepy word now and then, which he knew came from the blue-eyed one. They were much fewer than those of the other two. Some vague picture of those eyes, patiently sad, as he had conceived them, kept itself between him and sleep, until finally it was sudden morning, and the splendid light of Japan, subdued by the *shoji*, was shining in his face.

He lay indolently awake for a long time. Presently a noise not much greater than the alighting of a fly upon a stretched screen drew his attention. He perceived a dampened finger slowly working against the other side of the *shoji*, until presently the paper parted, and the finger came through. It was very pink at the

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tip. Slowly it reamed the hole larger, then disappeared, to be replaced by an eye. And the eye was blue. Garland nearly laughed aloud, until he remembered that he was the objective of the eye. Then unconsciously he arranged his hair a little, and began to pose. But the humor of it came down upon him again, and he laughed. The eyes instantly disappeared, and he could see the shadow of its owner gliding away. In a panic of regret, Garland called out:

"Don't go, Purple-Eyes!"

The shadow hesitated, and then returned.

"How you know tha' 's Purple-Eyes?"

"By her own confession—now."

Her pretty laugh sifted through the *shoji*.

"You want me come unto you?" asked the voice beyond. "That' 's what I dunno."

Garland was (in his own phrase again) quite paralyzed. He might have thought, but he did not, that she was only tendering the offices of the servant they did not have; but he called out, with a mixture of bravado and trembling which alarmed them both:

"Yes; come in!"

The damaged *shoji* slid haltingly aside, and she entered very slowly and softly, and he thought of the pictures of the returning Sun-Goddess as she came through the opening and down the burst of light it let in. As she prostrated herself Garland noticed that her hair had been newly dressed (an operation of several

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hours), and that she wore a dainty blue kimono, too gay for any but a geisha to wear. But it became her royally.

"You look more than ever like a picture on a fan," greeted Garland, with even more admiration in his eyes than in his voice.

Instead of being pleased, as any other Japanese girl would have been, Purple-Eyes slowly shook her head.

"Alas! you naever see no picture on fan lig unto me."

"But I have," insisted Garland.

She shook her head again.

"Well, then, if not, why not?"

"They got not those purple eye—an' pink face—an' flaming hair—"

She sighed, and looked askance at Garland. He seemed fully to agree with her. She changed her tone to one of resigned solicitude and ceremony.

"You sleeping well—all those night?"

"Well, by the great Jehovah and the Continental Congress, if I were a Japanese artist, that is the kind of eyes and face and hair they should all have! Yes, sir!—every blamed one of them!"

The girl caught her breath, and something flamed up her face and lighted her splendid eyes anew. She dared to look at him. It had all sounded quite true. Wistfully she dissembled—this at least was truly Japanese.

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"You sleeping well all"—she lost her purpose for a moment—"all those night—all?"

"Blue eyes for me, every day in the week."

"You sleeping well?" Joy was all too plainly in her voice now—irrepressible joy.

He laughed, and caught her hands rapturously. She did not deny him, and he kissed them.

"Oh, you are delightful!" said he.

"Me? I don' sleep—moach."

"You look as fresh as new porcelain."

"Yaes; I been fix up."

She consciously let him look her over.

"No; I didn't sleep at first. I was listening to your voice," Garland confessed, quite without reservation.

The girl was confused a little.

"You don' lig be annoy with those voice?"

"Why, it is divine!"

A white shaft of fear crossed her face.

"Tha' 's—jus'—fun—I egspeg?"

"Tha' 's ver' earnest," he gayly mocked.

He was pleasing her now. She even went with his mood a little way. Joy was such a beautiful and tempting and elusive thing!

"Lig goddess, mebbby?"

Garland nodded seriously.

"Tha' 's nize—for *me*."

"An' for *me*"—in quite her own manner.

"But not the goddesses?"

They laughed together, and she drew confidently a little closer to him.

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"Listen; I go'n' tell you a thing. You *not* in fun—*not*?"

"I mean every word," declared Garland, "and more than I have words to mean."

"An' you lig be tell?"

"That is what I am waiting so impatiently for—to be tell."

"Tha' 's nize. Eijinsan 'most always fun. Nobody but you aever lig those hair an' eye. Aeverybody hate me. *Why*? Account they say I b'long pink-face people. Account my fadder he sei yo jin—a west-ocean mans. *I* di'n' do so unto those hair an' eye! I can *not* help. *Me*? When I see you got those purple eye lig unto me, an' also those yellow hairs, an' all pink in the face, I thing mebby you go'n' lig me liddle—lig I was brodder an' fadder with you. Also, I thing mebby you go'n' take me away with you—beyond those west-ocean, where pink-face people live. *Me*? Don' you thing those pink-face people lig me liddle if I come unto them?"

"God bless you—yes," said Garland, with something suspiciously tender in voice and eyes. He still had her hands, delighting in them, caressing them. The girl's face was irradiated. She poured out all her soul for him.

"*Me*? Listen 'nother time. Before I know you' eyes purple an' you' hair yellow lig unto me, I lig you? *Me*? Sa-ay—I lig jus' your *picture*!" She laughed, confused, and shifted a

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little closer. "You don' hate me account I doing those?"

"No," said Garland, guiltily—"no, I don't hate you."

"Sa-ay—you go'n' take me at those pink-face people?"

Garland was silent.

"*If* you don', I got go myself. *Me?* I *got* go!"

Garland nodded, and she understood him to have assented. This was wrong. But her joy was superb, and Garland had a very soft heart.

"Oh—*how* that is nize! *Me?* I got so. I dunno—all times seem lig I b'long 'cross west-ocean. Seem lig I different from *aeverybody* else. *Me?* I got have somebody *lig* me—somebody *touch* me—hole my hands—*so—so—so!*" She illustrated fervidly.

Garland, alarmed at her dynamic emotion, released them. She returned them to him.

"*But*—nobody don' *wish*. Others—Japan people—they don' lig be ligued. But me? I *got* be—else I got pain in my heart an' am ill. You aever have those pain at you' heart—lig you all times falling down—down—down? Tha' 's mos' tarrible. Tha' 's lone-some-ness. *Me?* I thing I go'n' die sometime account that. Tha' 's lone-some-ness to cross west-ocean to pink-face people. Yaes; tha' 's why I *got* do those. Oku-Sama—tha' 's my modder—she saying 'most all times, 'Jus' lig pink-face people. Always got be lig by 'nother—touch by 'nother—speak sof' by

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'nother.' An' tha' 's *you*—yaes! You lig me, an' you touch me, an' you speak sof' unto me the ver' first time I seeing you. *Me?* I *know*, those time I first seeing you, that you don' hate me account I got those pink face upon me."

"No," admitted Garland, seriously.

"*How* that is nize! It make something rest—go 'sleep inside me. I got that peace. Jus' when you touch my hand at first I got some happiness. But *now*—I got that peace."

She began regretfully to detach herself. Garland detained her. She was very dainty and very confiding—very wise. She had unconsciously got very close to him. And Garland had vanquished his alarm of her.

"*Me?* I don' wish; but I got git you some-things eat. Soon you starve. I *got*."

But Garland would not let her go—and she was a willing captive, though she dissembled an urgent necessity.

"Where is Black-Eyes—and your mother?" asked Garland.

The girl seemed reluctant, but told him that they all worked in the neighboring silk-mill, the pulsations of which he had heard in the night.

"Never mind. I'd rather famish," said the impulsive Garland, with a strange remorse. "Will you assist?"

"Yaes," laughed the girl. "*Me?* I been famish—many times."

"Heavens!" breathed Garland, inventorying

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all her daintiness once more. "How much do your mother and sister earn?"

The girl seemed quite indifferent as to this.

"Sometime fi' sen; sometime ten—fifteen; one times, twenty-two."

"And you?"

"Me? Oh, jus' liddle."

She earned more than the other two.

"And what does it cost you to live?"

"Live? Half those fi'—ten—fifteen sen."

"And you save the rest? That is very prudent."

The girl looked bewildered; then she explained:

"Other half sen' Brownie."

He suddenly let her go. She leaned over him bewitchingly.

"Firs' some breakfas'; then I go'n' help you famish—all day! What you thing?"

She came back in a moment. The sleeves of her kimono were tucked out of the way, and there was rice-flour on her pretty arms.

"You go'n' to naever tell—'bout those fi'—ten—fifteen sen, an' all those?"

"No," said Garland; "I will never tell."

"Else they go'n' kill me," she threatened gayly.

"I prefer to have you live," he laughed, as brightly as he could.

"Tha' 's secret among jus' you an' me?"

"Yes," said Garland.

PURPLE-EYES

She started away, then came back.

"*Me?* I lig—I *lig*—have secret among jus' you an' me." With a radiant face she fled.

And here was Brownie's poor little skeleton stripped naked. He had lived at the university like a gentleman. He was still living in Philadelphia like a gentleman. Garland wondered whether it would make any difference in Philadelphia if it were known that it was the pitiful "fi"—ten—fifteen sen" that his mother and sisters earned each day that supported him. A great disgust for Brownie and a great pity for Purple-Eyes were the immediate postulates. And is not pity akin to love?

III—THE DANCE OF THE RED MAPLE-LEAVES

The question of making one's toilet in the interior of Japan is still a serious one for the American who lives behind closed doors and cherishes his divine right of privacy. Garland had solved the vexation for all his contemporaries (according to Garland) by making his toilet as to half or quarter of his sacred person at a time (depending somewhat upon the danger of surprise), thus reducing the chances of exposure by one-half or three-quarters. Purple-Eyes brought him the requisites for his toilet, and the moment she was gone he bared his shoulders and chest, and plunged into the delightful water, perfumed, like everything else, with the aroma

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Japonica. But his pretty hostess reappeared through the movable walls at an unwatched place.

He abandoned a momentary impulse to scuttle behind the screen because of the admiration he saw in her eyes, and then he half turned that she might see the muscles of his back.

"*How* you are beau-ti-ful!" she said slowly, as her eyes traveled, quite without embarrassment, over his athletic uppers.

"Thanks," he laughed, with pleasure in the little incident.

Garland turned a little further, and raised his arms above his head in the way of athletes.

She handed him a towel he had dropped.

"I thing I come tell you we got large tub for bath," she said then.

"Where is it?" asked Garland, suspiciously.

"There."

She pointed.

"That's what I thought. You must excuse me. I can't perform that sacred rite in the fierce light that beats upon a front porch."

"Yaes? Eijinsan don' lig?" She did not understand.

"No," admitted Garland.

"Also, you lig for me go 'way liddle?"

Garland said yes, and she went.

When she returned, it was with a delightful breakfast of fish, rice, and persimmons. She put the little table between them, and on her knees,

PURPLE-EYES

on the other side, taught him how to eat as a Japanese should. This is really not difficult, except the chopsticks; and with these she had to help him so often that their fingers were in almost constant contact. Alas! Garland made it as difficult as possible. And, alas! Garland was glad of the chopsticks!

Her joy overflowed the mouth and eyes which it seemed should know nothing but tears.

Afterward he helped her, with masculine joy of his own ineptitude, to reform the apartment, and secrete the things which had made it successively a reception-room, sleeping-chamber, and breakfast-room. You may judge whether or not this was delightful to a fellow like Garland, and also whether it was perilous.

It is not often that one has the felicity of ending one's breakfast with a song, and then of ending the song with a dance. Purple-Eyes brought her samisen quite without suggestion from Garland, and said with naïveté:

"I go'n' sing you a song. You lig me sing?"

"Try me!" challenged Garland, with an admiration in his eyes which pleased her greatly.

"Long down behine the Suwanee River" was the curious song she sang, in Japanese English.

Garland laughed.

"Don' you lig those?" she pouted. "I learn it for you."

He said it was lovely, and begged her to go on. But his eyes wandered from the fingers on the

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strings to those on the plectrum, and then away to the lips above; and when she turned into the chorus he joined her with his inconstant eyes still there. It was only an indifferent tenor, but the girl thought it full of fervor. It was only that it joined and mingled with hers—as she fancied their spirits doing and might always do.

“*How* that is nize!” she breathed in frank ecstasy. “You got voice lig—lig—”

But there was nothing at hand to compare it with, and she laughed confessingly.

“Nothing,” said Garland. “It’s original.”

“Yaes—nothing original,” she admitted.

“Sing another,” begged Garland, with enthusiasm.

She did—“When the swallows flying home”; and then still another—“’Tis the last rosebud summer.”

“Where did you learn them?” asked he.

“That day when I got you’ picture. *Me?* I thing you lig me sing, mebbby. Well, I git those song; I make them United States’ language, so you comprehend.”

“God bless you!” said Garland.

The girl leaned forward with dewy eyes.

“Sa-ay—you lig me also dance—jus’ one—liddle—dance—for *you?*”

She came bewitchingly nearer. Garland glanced again at her geisha-like costume. Had she thought all this out for his entertainment, he wondered.

PURPLE-EYES

"Yes," he said.

"But—you naev—*naever* go'n' tell?"

She raised her brows, and held up a finger archly.

"On my sacred honor!" laughed Garland.

"No one?"

"Not a soul."

"Tha' 's go'n' be 'nother secret among jus' you an' me foraever an' aeever?"

"Forever and ever," announced Garland, as if it were the Service.

"Account if you aeever do, they go'n' kill me!"

"What! Kill you?"

"Dade!" She nodded ominously.

"Who?"

"Black-Eyes an' those modder."

"Oh!" said Garland. He understood.

He was left to guess that this dainty flower had been taught the arts of a geisha to assist also in keeping up Brownie's state.

"I lig dance for *you*," confessed the girl, joyously. "Others? No; I do not lig. They as' me, 'Where you got those pink face?' *Me?* I don' lig those. I rather work in those mill. My modder an' my sister getting all times an-gery—account I don' dance. *But*—tha' 's in-sult upon me! I don't *lig* be insult. So! *Me?* I jus' don' dance for no one—but—but—but—jus'—*you!*"

She vanished through the *shoji*, and presently returned, a symphony in autumnal reds and browns.

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"I go'n' dance for you that red maple-leaf dance. Me? I am that leaf."

"You look it," said Garland, more tenderly than he knew.

The girl spread her garments that he might inspect her.

"This is a forest," she went on; "an' you—sa-ay—you a *tree*! Aha, ha, ha!"

She laughed, made him a noble courtesy, and murmured a little tune to which she floated down from the top of a maple-tree. For a while she lay quite still, shivering a little. Then the wind stirred her, and she rose, and swept down upon Garland, then back and into a whirl of other leaves. Then hither and thither, merrily, like an autumn leaf, until she shivered down at his feet, with bowed head.

She was making it more and more perilous for Garland.

IV—"HOW THAT IS NIZE!"

That night they had a gay little supper, with a tiny servant, who, Garland guessed, with entire accuracy, had been borrowed for the occasion.

"You got nize day?" asked Black-Eyes.

Garland caught a startled glance from Purple-Eyes, and answered discreetly that he had had—oh, yes; a very pleasant day, giving no damaging particulars.

But Black-Eyes fancied from the blankness of his countenance that he was indulging in the

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same kind of prevarication with which she would have met such a question. She devoted herself to him all the rest of the evening. As he retired for the night, the last thing she said to him, with a reproachful glance at Purple Eyes, was:

"To-morrow you go'n have mos' bes' nize times. *I* go'n' stay home with you!"

And she did, making it a very dreary day for Garland. He could not help thinking of Purple-Eyes at the factory, with her dainty hands begrimed.

But presently, when she returned, there was no grime upon her hands. She was dainty and smiling.

"You got nize day?" she asked, with her head coyly down. She knew he had not. And she purposely quoted her sister.

"No," he said savagely. "I'm glad it's over."

The flame was in her face again. But she kept it down.

"I think Black-Eyes ver' be-witch-ing."

"But she is not—*you*," he said.

She looked slowly up. The little weariness which had been limned upon her face by the day's drudgery was gone, and in its stead was a vague glory reflected from within.

"*How* that is nize," she whispered — "for *me*!"

"For me," said Garland, approaching her threateningly. She did not retreat. She subsided a little toward him—just a little—that he

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might know she would never retreat from him. Her eyes smiled confidently.

He stopped where he was.

"Who is to be chatelaine to-morrow?"

"What is that chat—" she asked.

"Who is to keep the house?"

"Me. Me one day, Black-Eyes next."

She saw his face lighten.

"You lig that?"

"I like half of it."

She thought a moment until she understood; then she lifted her shining face.

"Ah, Eijinsan, how be-witch-ing *you* are!"

V—THE PLAINTIVE TEMPLE BELLS

The next day they went up to the temple on the mountain-side, the plaintive bells of which Garland had heard. Purple-Eyes was tall, and walked with less difficulty than most Japanese girls, so they walked. It was a day of dreams. Garland remembered afterward the smell of the incense, the voices of the chanting *bonzes*, that the tea-house on the mountain-side where they rested called itself the House of the Seven Golden Crystals; the rest was Purple-Eyes—and happiness. Japan had been growing upon him for three months, and now unhappiness made but little impression.

The day remained in his mind with the sum of his dreams—this lotus-eating, nectar-drinking, happy-go-lucky Garland!

PURPLE-EYES

Thus it curiously went on. One day it was Black-Eyes, and the true Japan, and the real Garland. The next it was Purple-Eyes, and the ideal Japan, and the lotus-eating Garland. What is more like lotus-eating than being adored? At first Garland used to smile at the strange dual life which circumstances had wrought out for him. Then he used to wonder which was better. Later he tried to decide only which he liked better. Now he no longer differentiated at all. His analytical edge was quite dulled. Still, he had heard that this fever of Japan always wore off. Some said it lasted as long as two years, some said five; no one had said ten. And what then?

“Why, then? *Me!*”

He had spoken the last three words aloud, and they had been answered by the laughing, dewy-eyed subject of them.

He looked at her.

“Well, one ought to be content,” he laughed.

“An’ you—content?” she smiled back.

He did not answer at once.

“Do you know that you have been growing more bewitching every day since—”

“Sinze *you*—an’ *joy*—came at Japan?”

From the opened *shoji* she flung him the gay greeting he had taught her, and disappeared; for it was Black-Eyes’ day, and she had yet to dress for her work.

That day he harbored madly the notion of mar-

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riage with Purple-Eyes and a residence in Japan. It had quite infected him before night, and was distinctly, but less and less strongly, in his mind for several days. But then came a letter from his elder brother, in answer to his own of a rather confessional and emotional sort, asking him what he meant by living upon three working-women. It told him to go away—to the devil—anywhere—but away from there. It was like a cold douche. The fever Japonica, as every one had said, was at last gone. So small a thing as his brother's letter had cured it. Now he smiled. He had meant to write to Miss Warburton, offering to release her.

VI—"SAYONARA?"

I know not what he said to Purple-Eyes, but with her tears there was a certain buoyancy that had not been there but for some hope. And why not? For Garland was a very sweet and gentle fellow, who abhorred pain. The three went to see him off, and he tried desperately to be gay; but something was pulling at his heart-strings, and there were tears perilously near his eyes. Black-Eyes did not marvel at this. She had always understood that it was the way of west-ocean men. But they were only too evidently ready to be answered by other tears in the dewy eyes that were blue. And *this* was annoying to Black-Eyes. She made her sister tremble by a look. So she of the blue eyes could only grasp and hold

PURPLE-EYES

Garland's big hand in both her own exquisite ones when the others looked away. When their eyes returned hers looked off to the big funnels of the ship, though she still held the hand. But when she looked at Garland again he had his handkerchief to his eyes; something inside had given way. Then hers came from her sleeve, too. So at last it was quite a little tragedy.

Sad it is that one forgets that one has eaten of the lotus; but thus it is with the lotus, and thus did Garland.

That night, in bed, Black-Eyes undertook some criticism of Garland. Her sister flared up in a way that was new and superb.

"Tha' 's a lie! He's the mos' bes' nize gent in the whole worl'." And she fell to sobbing.

"What is the matter?" asked the mother, who was kinder than Black-Eyes.

"I got that lone-some-ness," sobbed the girl, in answer.

"Poor little pink-face!" said the mother, touching her cheek. "Always must be touch by some one!"

"*Me?*" said Purple-Eyes, with a power and assurance which were startling. "I am glad I have that pink face!" She laughed. "And I am glad I have *not* that brown face! Aha!"

The mother asked in alarm:

"Has the Eijinsan told you strange things?"

"The strangest and most beautiful things in all the world!" breathed Purple-Eyes. "Not

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told them, but looked them—thought them—to me.”

“And you believed?”

“I believed.”

“That is very sad,” said the mother. “It is the way of the west-ocean men.”

“Ah, it *is* his way, thank Shaka! and it is *not* sad. It is very joyous.”

“Shaka grant that it is not, my daughter. To the Eijinsan you are only a plaything, I fear.”

“He may have me for a plaything,” said the girl, defiantly. “Who has not playthings?”

“When a plaything becomes shabby—”

“But I am not, and I never shall be.”

“In a little while we shall know,” said the mother, finally.

“In a little while we shall know,” repeated the girl, joyously.

VII—“WHAT YOU BED?”

Later they found the letter—in the discarded conversation-book. It said that Garland was having his final outing before becoming a Benedict; and the missionary on the hill told them that that meant that he was to be married upon his return to America. Purple-Eyes drew a sharp breath, then faced the other two savagely. She was able to laugh presently; but it was a very piteous laugh.

“Tha’ ’s what I know! Aha, ha, ha! He—he—tell me all those.” But the pitiful lie stuck in

PURPLE-EYES

her throat, and her lips were dry. "He tell me *aevery*-thing! Yaes"—to a look of doubt from Black-Eyes—"he go'n' marry that other for jus' liddle—"

"Speak Japanese," said her mother, who was not so clever at English as her daughters; but the request fell like a lash upon Purple-Eyes' heart.

"I will not!" she flamed forth. "I will speak his language. He will come for me. If he do not come, I shall go to him. He go'n' marry that other—if he marry her—if—jus' liddle—*Me?* He go'n' marry me las' an' foraevery!"

Suddenly she became aware that she had betrayed her secret.

"Oh, all the gods in the sky!" she cried in anguish. "Tha' 's lie. He *not* go'n' marry me. He *don'* say. Jus' I thing so—jus' I—" She had to debase herself still further, if she would be shriven. "He *not* go'n' come for me. I *not* go'n' go at him. *Me?* Tha' 's correc', Oku-San; I jus' his liddle plaything. He don't say naw-thing. Jus' *I* thing so."

Her mother nodded.

"And when he tires of the plaything—"

She threw an imaginary something into the air.

"Yaes," whispered Purple-Eyes, humbly bowing her head; but when her face was down she smiled. It was all very sure to her. As she looked up she saw something like malevolence upon the face of her sister.

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"*But*—also he not *go'n'* marry that other foraever!" Her sister smiled unbelievably.

"I bed you don'!"

"Ah! *what* you bed?" challenged Black-Eyes.

"That heart in my bosom!" answered Purple-Eyes.

VIII—LONE-SOME-NESS

Garland did not reach the end of his ante-Benedick wanderings until a year later. Then he found, among other letters awaiting him, one in a long, dainty envelope addressed in English and Japanese. He knew it was from Purple-Eyes before he opened it. It was seven months old.

As he read, all her little tricks of inflection came back upon him. He knew that her long white hands were waving emphases at him—very gently. The questioning which her eyes had learned after his coming—as if she were not quite sure of something—was upon him out of the shadows beyond the lamp. The subtle aromas which always exhaled from her garments were distinct enough to startle him. He looked quickly back and about the room. Then he laughed softly. But his face had flushed, and gladness had lit his eyes. The fever Japonica was once more in his veins—and it was his own room—and America—with only her pictured face (fallen from the envelope) before him—herself on the other side of the world. Unconsciously he read aloud—in her voice and manner:

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"That is ledder from me, Miss Purple-Eyes, unto you, Mister J. F. Garland. That is nize day in Japan. I lig if you hoarry soon coming at Japan 'nother time. You been 'way ver' long time. I lig if you hoarry account aeverybody hating me more an' more. I got those feeling again 'bout somethings I want an' have not got it. That is lone-some-ness. That is to cross west-ocean. You have also got those? Me? I been that sad aever sinze you gone me away from. I been that ill. I thing mebbly I go'n' die soon. *Aexcep'* you come? Say you go'n' come, that I don' die? Black-Eyes she all times make amusement 'bout you don' come. That is a liar. She don' know you who you are. She don' know you that you go'n' come soon as you kin. Mebbly you go'n' marry with those pink-face for liddle while? Me? I study those conversation-book so I kin write unto you. Also, I fine those ledder you lose when you first arrive among us at Japan. You desire those ledder? Me? I keep it upon my bosom among those photograph of you. Mister J. F. Garland, I don' keer you do marry those other for liddle while. Then you go'n' marry me las' an' foraevery. Jus' hoarry. Yit I am not gay. I can not be gay until you come again. That is sad for me. Also, you do not lig for me be gay, but lig unto widow till you come. Then, Mister J. F. Garland, I shall be that happy. Mebbly you ill an' can not come unto me? Then I come unto you, if you wish

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me. What you thing? That is a picture of me lig I promise. I fix up same lig those day you hol' my hands. How that was nize! That is first time I aeever been my hands hol' so nize—so sof'. Mister J. F. Garland, that is you hol' my hands that sof'. Me? I don' let no one else do those unto my hands—lig you wishing, mebbby. Jus' you. Mister J. F. Garland, you go'n' hol' my hands all times this afterwhile? Say, don't stay marry with that other so ver' long. Account those lone-some-ness. Please sen' me picture of those other you marry unto. If you marry unto them. I lig see how she is that beautiful. Please write me letter aevery day. Please come back that soon. So I kin be joyous. It is that sad for me."

Every laboriously formed letter, printed like the first copy of a child at school, told him what this had cost her; and the little flourishes at the end, where she had grown more certain, what pride she had in them! The picture was exquisitely colored, as only the Japanese can color them, and had been very costly to her. He set it before him, and with his head in his hands studied it. The eyes were very blue, but no bluer than her own. They looked into his half sadly, half gayly, tempting him again. The Japan fever had its way with him, and for a moment—ten—he lived that lotus life with her over again. Then came a great upheaval inside which

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was yearning. He was tired. He had been tired ever since leaving Japan. In those eyes he saw again the invitation to rest. The hair, with its brassy lustre—he could see the sun on it again—smell its perfume—feel it under his hands. The lips were parted a little, as they nearly always were, and within showed the brilliant teeth.

“Oh,” he cried out, as he rose, “get thee behind me—moon-goddess—get thee behind me!” He laughed wofully, and took up the picture again. “I thought it gone—the fever—the dreaming—the lotus-eating.”

There was a knock on the door, and a messenger-boy handed in the answer to a note.

“Yes,” it ran; “I shall be home at eight—*and so glad!*”

It was twenty minutes to eight.

Garland hurried into his evening clothes and hastened away, leaving the rest of the letters unopened. But he came back, from down the stairs, and again set the picture up before him. Then he strode softly up and down the apartment, a smile half sad, half gay, upon his face. The little clock chimed the few notes which told him it was a quarter past eight. He smiled—another kind of smile. He had forgotten—that she would be at home at eight and would be glad! He looked again briefly at the picture of Purple-Eyes. There was moisture in his own. Then softly, as if it were sentiment, he turned it face down and went out.

THE RUN OF THE YELLOW MAIL

BY FRANK H. SPEARMAN

THE RUN OF THE YELLOW MAIL

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THERE wasn't another engineer on the division who dared talk to Doubleday the way Jimmie Bradshaw did.

But Jimmie had a grievance, and every time he thought about it, it made him nervous.

Ninety-six years. It seemed a good while to wait; yet in the regular course of events on the mountain division there appeared no earlier prospect of Jimmie's getting a passenger run.

"Got your rights, ain't you?" said Doubleday, when Jimmie complained.

"I have and I haven't," grumbled Jimmie, winking hard; "there's younger men than I am on the fast runs."

"They got in on the strike; you've been told that a hundred times. We can't get up another strike just to fix you out on a fast run. Hang on to your freight. There's better men than you in Ireland up to their belt in the bog, Jimmie."

"It's a pity they didn't leave you there, Doubleday."

From "Held for Orders," copyright, 1901, by McClure, Phillips & Co.

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"You'd have been a good while hunting for a freight run if they had."

Then Jimmie would get mad and shake his finger and talk fast: "Just the same, I'll have a fast run here when you're dead."

"Maybe; but I'll be alive a good while yet, my son," the master mechanic would laugh. Then Jimmie would walk off very warm, and when he got into private with himself he would wink furiously and say friction things about Doubleday which needn't now be printed, because it is different. However, the talk always ended that way, and Jimmie Bradshaw knew it always would end that way.

The trouble was, no one on the division would take Jimmie seriously, and he felt that the ambition of his life would never be fulfilled; that he would go plugging to gray hairs and the grave on an old freight train; and that even when he got to the right side of the Jordan there would still be something like half a century between him and a fast run. It was funny to hear him complaining about it, for everything, even his troubles, came funny to him, and in talking he had an odd way of stuttering with his eyes, which were red. In fact, Jimmie was nearly all red; hair, face, hands—they said his teeth were freckled.

When the first rumors about the proposed Yellow Mail reached the mountains Jimmie was running a new ten-wheeler; breaking her in on a

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freight "for some fellow without a lick o' sense to use on a limited passenger run," as Jimmie observed bitterly. The rumors about the mail came at first like stray mallards—opening signs of winter—and as the season advanced flew thicker and faster. Washington never was very progressive in the matter of improving the trans-continental service, but they once put in a postmaster-general down there, by mistake, who wouldn't take the old song. When the bureau fellows that put their brains up in curl papers told him it couldn't be done he smiled softly, but he sent for the managers of the crack lines across the continent, without suspecting how it bore incidentally on Jimmie Bradshaw's grievance against his master mechanic.

The postmaster-general called the managers of the big lines, and they had a dinner at Chamberlain's, and *they* told him the same thing. "It has been tried," they said in the old, tired way; "really it can't be done."

"California has been getting the worst of it for years on the mail service," persisted the postmaster-general moderately. "But Californians ought to have the best of it. We don't think anything about putting New York mail in Chicago in twenty hours. It ought to be simple to cut half a day across the continent and give San Francisco her mail a day earlier. Where's the fall-down?" he asked, like one refusing no for an answer.

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The general managers looked at our representative sympathetically, and coughed cigar smoke his way to hide him.

"West of the Missouri," murmured a Pennsylvania swell, who pulled indifferently at a fifty-cent cigar. Everybody at the table took a drink on the *exposé*, except the general manager, who sat at that time for the Rocky Mountains.

The West End representative was unhappily accustomed to facing the finger of scorn on such occasions. It had become with our managers a tradition. There was never a conference of continental lines in which we were not scoffed at as the weak link in the chain of everything—mail, passenger, specials, what not—the trouble was invariably laid at our door.

But this time there was a new man sitting for the line at the Chamberlain dinner; a youngish man with a face that set like cement when the West End was trod upon.

The postmaster-general was inclined, from the reputation we had, to look on our chap as a man looks at a dog without a pedigree, or at a dray horse in a bunch of standard breeds. But something in the mouth of the West End man gave him pause; since the Rough Riders, it has been a bit different about verdicts on things Western. The postmaster-general suppressed a rising sarcasm with a sip of Chartreuse, for the dinner was ripening, and waited; nor did he mistake—the West Ender *was* about to speak.

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"Why west of the Missouri?" he asked, with a lift of the face that was not altogether candid. The Pennsylvania man shrugged his brows; to explain might have seemed indelicate.

"If it is put through, how much of it do you propose to take yourself?" inquired our man, looking evenly at the Alleghany official.

"Sixty-five miles, including stops from New York post-office to Canal Street," replied the Pennsylvania man, and his words flowed with irritating smoothness and ease.

"What do you take?" continued the man with the jaw, turning to the Burlington representative, who was struggling, belated, with an artichoke.

"*About* seventy from Canal to Tenth and Mason. Say, seventy," repeated the "Q" manager, with the lordliness of a man who has miles to throw at almost anybody, and knows it.

"Then suppose we say sixty-five from Tenth and Mason to Ogden," suggested the West Ender. There was a well-bred stare the table round, a lifting of glasses to mask expressions that might give pain. Sixty-five miles an *hour*? Through the *Rockies*?

But the postmaster-general struck the table quickly and heavily; he didn't want to let it get away. "Why, hang it, Mr. Bucks," he exclaimed with emphasis, "if you will say sixty, the business is done. We don't ask you to do the Rockies in the time these fellows take to cut the

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Alleghanies. Do sixty, and I will put mail in 'Frisco a day earlier every week in the year."

"Nothing on the West End to keep you from doing it," said General Manager Bucks. He had been put up then only about six months. "But—"

Every one looked at the young manager. The Pennsylvania man looked with confidence, for he instantly suspected there must be a string to such a proposition, or that the new representative was "talking through his hat."

"But what?" asked the Cabinet member, uncomfortably apprehensive.

"But we are not putting on a sixty-five mile schedule just because we love our country, you understand, nor to lighten an already glorious reputation. Oh, no," smiled Bucks faintly, "we are doing it for 'the stuff.' You put up the money; we put up the speed. Not sixty miles; sixty-five—from the Missouri to the Sierras. No; no more wine. Yes, thank you, I will take a cigar."

The trade was on from that minute. Bucks said no more then; he was a good listener. But next day—when it came to talking money—he talked more money into the West End treasury for one year's running than was ever talked before on a mail contract for the best three years' work we ever did.

When they asked him how much time he wanted to get ready, and told him to take plenty,

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three months were stipulated. The contracts were drawn, and they were signed by our people without hesitation because they knew Bucks. But while the preparations for the fast schedule were being made, the Government weakened on signing. Nothing ever got through a Washington department without hitch, and they said our road had so often failed on like propositions that they wanted a test. There was a deal of wrangling, then a test run was agreed upon by all the roads concerned. If it proved successful—if the mail was put to the Golden Gate on the second of the schedule—public opinion and the interests in the Philippines, it was concluded, would justify the heavy premium asked for the service.

In this way the dickering and the figuring became, in a measure, public, and keyed up everybody interested to a high pitch. We said nothing for publication, but under Bucks' energy sawed wood for three whole months. Indeed, three months goes as a day getting a system into shape for an extraordinary schedule. Success meant with us prestige; but failure meant obloquy for the road and for our division chief who had been so lately called to handle it.

The real strain, it was clear, would come on his old—the mountain—division; and to carry out the point rested on the motive power of the mountain division; hence, concretely, on Doubleday, master mechanic of the hill country.

In thirty days Neighbor, superintendent of

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the motive power, called for reports from the division master mechanics on the preparations for the Yellow Mail run, and they reported progress. In sixty days he called again. The subordinates reported well except Doubleday. Doubleday said merely "Not ready"; he was busy tinkering with his engines. There was a third call in eighty days, and on the eighty-fifth a peremptory call. Everybody said ready except Doubleday. When Neighbor remonstrated sharply, he would say only that he would be ready in time. That was the most he would promise, though it was generally understood that if he failed to deliver the goods he would have to make way for somebody who could.

The plains division of the system was marked up for seventy miles an hour, and, if the truth were told, a little better; but, with all the help they could give us, it still left sixty for the mountains to take care of, and the Yellow Mail proposition was conceded to be the toughest affair the motive power at Medicine Bend ever faced. However, forty-eight hours before the mail left the New York post-office Doubleday wired to Neighbor, "Ready"; Neighbor to Bucks, "Ready"; and Bucks to Washington, "Ready"—and we were ready from end to end.

Then the orders began to shoot through the mountains. The test run was of especial importance, because the signing of the contract was believed to depend on the success of it. Once

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signed, accidents and delays might be explained; for the test run there must be no delays. Despatches were given the 11, which meant Bucks; no lay-outs, no slows for the Yellow Mail. Road masters were notified: no track work in front of the Yellow Mail. Bridge gangs were warned, yard masters instructed, section bosses cautioned, track walkers spurred—the system was polished like a barkeeper's diamond, and swept like a parlor car for the test flight of the Yellow Mail.

Doubleday, working like a boiler washer, spent all day Thursday and all Thursday night in the roundhouse. He had personally gone over the engines that were to take the racket in the mountains. Ten-wheelers they were, the 1012 and the 1014, with fifty-six-inch drivers and cylinders big enough to sit up and eat breakfast in. Spick and span both of them, just long enough out of the shops to run smoothly to the work; and on Friday Oliver Sollers, who, when he opened a throttle, blew miles over the tender like feathers, took the 1012, groomed as you'd groom a Wilkes mare, down to Piedmont for the run up to the Bend.

Now Oliver Sollers was a runner in a thousand, and steady as a clock; but he had a fireman who couldn't stand prosperity, Steve Horigan, a cousin of Johnnie's. The glory was too great for Steve, and he spent Friday night in Gallagher's place celebrating, telling the boys what the 1012 would do to the Yellow Mail. Not a

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thing, Steve claimed after five drinks, but pull the stamps clean off the letters the minute they struck the foothills. But when Steve showed up at five A. M. to superintend the movement, he was seasick. The instant Sollers set eyes on him he objected to taking him out. Mr. Sollers was not looking for any unnecessary chances on one of Bucks' personal matters, and for the general manager the Yellow Mail test had become exceedingly personal. Practically everybody East and West had said it would fail; Bucks said no.

Neighbor himself was on the Piedmont platform that morning, watching things. The McCloud despatchers had promised the train to our division on time, and her smoke was due with the rise of the sun. The big superintendent of motive power, watching anxiously for her arrival, and planning anxiously for her outgoing, glared at the bunged fireman in front of him, and, when Sollers protested, Neighbor turned on the swollen Steve with sorely bitter words. Steve swore mightily he was fit and could do the trick—but what's the word of a railroad man that drinks? Neighbor spoke wicked words, and while they poured on the guilty Steve's crop there was a shout down the platform. In the east the sun was breaking over the sand-hills, and below it a haze of black thickened the horizon. It was McTerza with the 808 and the Yellow Mail. Neighbor looked at his watch; she was, if anything, a minute to the good, and before the

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car tinks could hustle across the yard, a streak of gold cut the sea of purple alfalfa in the lower valley, and the narrows began to smoke with the dust of the race for the platform.

When McTerza blocked the big drivers at the west end of the depot, every eye was on the new equipment. Three standard railway mail cars, done in varnished buttercup, strung out behind the sizzling engine, and they looked pretty as cowslips. While Neighbor vaguely mediated on their beauty and on his boozing fireman, Jimmie Bradshaw, just in from a night run down from the Bend, walked across the yard. He had just seen Steve Horigan making a "sneak" for the bath-house, and from the yard gossip Jimmie had guessed the rest.

"What are you looking for, Neighbor?" asked Jimmie Bradshaw.

"A man to fire for Sollers—up. Do you want it?"

Neighbor threw it at him across and carelessly, not having any idea Jimmie was looking for trouble. But Jimmie surprised him; Jimmie did want it.

"Sure, I want it. Put me on. Tired? No. I'm fresh as rainwater. Put me on, Neighbor; I'll never get fast any other way. Doubleday wouldn't give me a fast run in a hundred years. Neighbor," exclaimed Jimmie, greatly wrought, "put me on, and I'll plant sunflowers on your grave."

There wasn't much time to look around; the 1012 was being coupled on to the mail for the hardest run on the line.

"Get in there, you blamed idiot," roared Neighbor presently at Jimmie. "Get in and fire her; and if you don't give Sollers 210 pounds every inch of the way I'll set you back wiping."

Jimmie winked furiously at the proposition while it was being hurled at him, but he lost no time climbing in. The 1012 was drumming then at her gauge with better than 200 pounds. Adam Shafer, conductor for the run, ran backward and forward a minute examining the air. At the final word from his brakeman he lifted two fingers at Sollers; Oliver opened a notch, and Jimmie Bradshaw stuck his head out of the gangway. Slowly, but with swiftly rising speed, the yellow string began to move out through the long lines of freight cars that blocked the spurs; and those who watched that morning from the Piedmont platform thought a smoother equipment than Bucks' mail train never drew out of the mountain yards.

Jimmie Bradshaw jumped at the work in front of him. He had never in his life lifted a pick in as swell a cab as that. The hind end of the 1012 was as big as a private car; Jimmie had never seen so much play for a shovel in his life, and he knew the trick of his business better than most men even in West End cabs—the trick of holding the high pressure every minute, of feeling

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the draughts before they left the throttle; and as Oliver let the engine out very, very fast, Jimmie Bradshaw sprinkled the grate bars craftily and blinked at the shivering pointer, as much as to say, "It's you and me now for the Yellow Mail, and nobody else on earth."

There was a long reach of smooth track in front of the foothills. It was there the big start had to be made, and in two minutes the bark of the big machine had deepened to a chest tone full as thunder. It was all fun for an hour, for two hours. It was that long before the ambitious fireman realized what the new speed meant: the sickening slew, the lurch on lurch so fast the engine never righted, the shortened breath along the tangent, the giddy roll to the elevation and the sudden shock of the curve, the roar of the flight on the ear, and, above and over it all, the booming purr of the maddened steel. The canoe in the heart of the rapids, the bridge of a liner at sea, the gun in the heat of the fight, take something of this—the cab of the mail takes it all.

When they struck the foothills, Sollers and Jimmie Bradshaw looked at their watches and looked at each other, but like men who had turned their backs on every mountain record. There was a stop for water—speed drinks so hard—an oil round, an anxious touch on the journals; then the Yellow Mail drew reeling into the hills. Oliver eased her just a bit for the

heavier curves, but for all that the train writhed frantically as it cut the segments, and the men thought, in spite of themselves, of the mountain curves ahead. The worst of the run lay ahead of the pilot, because the art in mountain running is not alone or so much in getting up hill; it is in getting down hill. But by the way the Yellow Mail got that day up hill and down, it seemed as if Steve Horigan's dream would be realized, and that the 1012 actually would pull the stamps off the letters. Before they knew it they were through the gateway, out into the desert country, up along the crested buttes, and then, sudden as eternity, the wheel-base of the 1012 struck a tight curve, a pent-down rail sprang out like a knitting-needle, and the Yellow Mail shot staggering off the track into a gray borrow-pit.

There was a crunching of truck and frame, a crashing splinter of varnished cars, a scream from the wounded engine, a cloud of gray ash in the burning sun, and a ruin of human effort in the ditch. In the twinkle of an eye the mail train lay spilled on the alkali; for a minute it looked desperately bad for the general manager's test.

It was hardly more than a minute, though; then like ants from out a trampled hill men began crawling from the yellow wreck. There was more—there was groaning and worse, yet little for so frightful a shock. And first on his feet, with no more than scratches, and quickest back

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under the cab after his engineer, was Jimmie Bradshaw, the fireman.

Sollers, barely conscious, lay wedged between the tank and the footboard. Jimmie, all by himself, eased him away from the boiler. The conductor stood with a broken arm directing his brakeman how to chop a crew out of the head mail car, and the hind crews were getting out themselves. There was a quick calling back and forth, and the cry, "Nobody killed!" But the engineer and the conductor were put out of action. There was, in fact, but one West End man unhurt; yet that was enough—for it was Jimmie Bradshaw.

The first wreck of the fast mail—there have been worse since—took place just east of Crockett's siding. A west-bound freight lay at that moment on the passing track waiting for the mail. Jimmie Bradshaw cast up the possibilities of the situation the minute he righted himself.

Before the freight crew had reached the wreck, Jimmie was hustling ahead to tell them what he wanted. The freight conductor demurred; and when they discussed it with the freight engineer, Kingsley, he objected. "My engine won't never stand it; it'll pound her to pieces," he argued. "I reckon the safest thing to do is to get orders."

"Get orders!" stormed Jimmie Bradshaw, pointing at the wreck. "Get orders! Are you running an engine on this line and don't know the orders for those mail bags? The orders is to

move 'em! That's orders enough. Move 'em! Uncouple three of those empty box-cars and hustle 'em back. By the Great United States! any man that interferes with the moving of this mail will get his time—that's what he'll get. That's Doubleday, and don't you forget it. The thing is to move the mail—not stand here chewing about it!"

"Bucks wants the stuff hustled," put in the freight conductor, weakening before Jimmie's eloquence. "Everybody knows that."

"Uncouple there!" cried Jimmie, climbing into the Mogul cab. "I'll pull the bags, Kingsley; you needn't take any chances. Come back there, every mother's son of you, and help on the transfer."

He carried his points with a gale. He was conductor and engineer and general manager all in one. He backed the boxes to the curve below the spill, and set every man at work piling the mail from the wrecked train to the freight cars. The wounded cared for the wounded, and the dead might have buried the dead; Jimmie moved the mail. Only one thing turned his hair gray; the transfer was so slow, it looked as if it would defeat his plan. As he stood fermenting, a stray party of Sioux bucks on a vagrant hunt rose out of the desert passes, and halted to survey the confusion. It was Jimmie Bradshaw's opportunity. He had the blanket men in council in a trice. They talked for one minute, in two

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he had them regularly sworn in and carrying second-class. The registered stuff was jealously guarded by those of the mail clerks who could still hobble—and who, head for head, leg for leg, and arm for arm, can stand the wrecking that a mail clerk can stand? The mail crews took the registered matter; the freight crews and Jimmie, dripping sweat and anxiety, handled the letter bags; but second and third class were temporarily hustled for the Great White Father by his irreverent children of the Rockies.

Before the disabled men could credit their senses the business was done, themselves made as comfortable as possible, and with the promise of speedy aid back to the injured, the Yellow Mail, somewhat disfigured, was again heading westward in the box-cars. This time Jimmie Bradshaw, like a dog with a bone, had the throttle. Jimmie Bradshaw for once in his life had the coveted fast run, and till he sighted Fort Rucker he never for a minute let up.

Meantime there was a desperate crowd around the despatcher at Medicine Bend. It was an hour and twenty minutes after Ponca Station reported the Yellow Mail out, before Fort Rucker, eighteen miles farther west, reported the box-cars and Jimmie Bradshaw in, and followed with a wreck report from the Crockett siding. When that end of it began to tumble into the Wickiup office Doubleday's face went very hard—fate was against him, the contract was gone

glimmering, he didn't feel at all sure his own head and the roadmaster's wouldn't follow it. Then the Rucker operator began again to talk about Jimmie Bradshaw, and "Who's Bradshaw?" asked somebody; and Rucker went on excitedly with the story of the Mogul and of three box-cars, and of a war party of Sioux squatting on the brake-wheels; it came so mixed that Medicine Bend thought everybody at Rucker Station had gone mad.

While they fumed, Jimmie Bradshaw was speeding the mail through the mountains. He had Kingsley's fireman, big as an ox and full of his own enthusiasm. In no time they were flying across the flats of the Spider Water, threading the curves of the Peace River, and hitting the rails of the Painted Desert, with the Mogul sprinting like a Texas steer, and the box-cars leaping like yearlings at the points. It was no case of scientific running, no case of favoring the roadbed, of easing the strain on the equipment; it was simply a case of galloping to a Broadway fire with a Silsby rotary on a 4—11 call. Up hill and down, curve and tangent, it was all one. There was speed made on the plains with that mail, and there was speed made in the foothills with the fancy equipment, but never the speed that Jimmie Bradshaw made when he ran the mail through the gorges in three box-cars; and frightened operators and paralyzed station-agents all the way up the line watched the fear-

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ful and wonderful train jump the switches with Bradshaw's red head sticking out of the cab window.

Medicine Bend couldn't get the straight of it over the wires. There was an electric storm in the mountains, and the wires went bad in the midst of the confusion. They knew there was a wreck, and supposed there was mail in the ditch, and, with Doubleday frantic, the despatchers were trying to get the track to run a train down to Crockett's. But Jimmie Bradshaw had asked at Rucker for rights to the Bend, and in an unguarded moment they had been given; after that it was all off. Nobody could get action on Jimmie Bradshaw to head him off. He took the rights, and stayed not for stake and stopped not for stone. In thirty minutes the operating department was ready to kill him, but he was making such time it was concluded better to humor the lunatic than to try to hold him up anywhere for a parley. When this was decided Jimmie and his war party were already reported past Bad Axe, fifteen miles below the Bend, with every truck on the box-cars smoking.

The Bad Axe run to the Bend was never done in less than fourteen minutes until Bradshaw that day brought up the mail. Between those two points the line is modeled on the curves of a ram's horn, but Jimmie with the Mogul found every twist on the right of way in eleven minutes; that particular record is good yet. Indeed,

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before Doubleday, then in a frenzied condition, got his cohorts fairly on the platform to look for Jimmie, the hollow scream of the big freight engine echoed through the mountains. Shouts from below brought the operators to the upper windows; down the Bend they saw a monster locomotive flying from a trailing horn of smoke. As the stubby string of freight cars slewed quartering into the lower yard, the startled officials saw them from the Wickiup windows wrapped in a stream of flame. Every journal was afire, and the blaze from the boxes, rolling into the steam from the stack, curled hotly around a bevy of Sioux Indians, who clung sternly to the footboards and brake-wheels on top of the box-cars. It was a ride for the red men that is told around the council fires yet. But they do not always add in their traditions that they were hanging on, not only for life, but also for a butt of plug tobacco promised for their timely help at Crockett siding.

By the time Jimmie slowed up his amazing equipment the fire brigade was on the run from the roundhouse. The Sioux warriors climbed hastily down the fire escapes, a force of bruised and bareheaded mail clerks shoved back the box-car doors, the car tinks tackled the conflagration, and Jimmie Bradshaw, dropping from the cab with the swing of a man who has done it, waited at the gangway for the questions to come to him, and for a minute they came hot.

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"What the blazes do you mean by bringing in an engine in that condition?" yelled Doubleday, pointing to the blown machine.

"I thought you wanted the mail," winked Jimmie.

"How the devil are we to get the mail with you blocking the track for two hours?" demanded Calahan insanely.

"Why, the mail's here—in these box-cars," responded Jimmie Bradshaw, pointing to his bob-tail train. "Now don't look daffy like that; every sack is right here. I thought the best way to get the mail here was to bring it. Hm! We're forty minutes late, ain't we?"

Doubleday waited to hear no more. Orders flew like curlews from the superintendent and the master mechanic. They saw there was a life for it yet. A string of new mail cars was backed down beside the train before the fire brigade had done with the trucks. The relieving mail crews waiting at the Bend took hold like cats at a pudding, and a dozen extra men helped them sling the pouches. The 1014, blowing porpoisewise, was backed up just as Benedict Morgan's train pulled down for Crockett's siding, and the Yellow Mail, rehabilitated, rejunevated, and exultant, started up the gorge for Bear Dance, only fifty-three minutes late, with Hanksworth in the cab.

"And if you can't make that up, Frank, you're no good on earth," spluttered Doubleday at the

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engineer he had put in for that special endeavor. And Frank Hawksworth did make it up, and the Yellow Mail went on and off the West End on the test, and into the Sierras for the coast, *on time*.

"There's a butt of plug tobacco and transportation to Crockett's coming to these bucks, Mr. Doubleday," winked Jimmie Bradshaw uncertainly, for with the wearing off of the strain came the idea to Jimmie that he might have to pay for it himself. "I promised them that," he added, "for helping with the transfer. If it hadn't been for the blankets we wouldn't have got off for another hour. They chew Tomahawk—rough and ready preferred—Mr. Doubleday. Hm!"

Doubleday was looking off into the mountains.

"You've been on a freight run some time, Jimmie," said he tentatively after a while.

The Indian detachment was crowding in pretty close on the red-headed engineer. He blushed. "If you'll take care of my tobacco contract, Doubleday, we'll call the other matter square. I'm not looking for a fast run as much as I was."

"If we get the mail contract," resumed Doubleday reflectively, "and it won't be your fault if we don't—hm!—we may need you on one of the runs. Looks to me like you ought to have one."

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Jimmie shook his head. "I don't want one—don't mind me; just fix these gentlemen out with some tobacco before they scalp me, will you?"

The Indians got their leaf, and Bucks got his contract, and Jimmie Bradshaw got the pick of the runs on the Yellow Mail, and ever since he's been kicking to get back on a freight. But they don't call him Bradshaw any more. No man in the mountains can pace him on a dare-devil run. And when the head brave of the hunting party received the butt of tobacco on behalf of his company, he looked at Doubleday with dignity, pointed to the sandy engineer, and spoke freckled words in the Sioux.

That's the way it came about. Bradshaw holds the belt for the run from Bad Axe to Medicine Bend; but he never goes by the name of Bradshaw any more. West of McCloud, everywhere up and down the mountains, they give him the name that the Sioux gave him that day—Jimmie the Wind.

THE SPIRAL STONE

BY ARTHUR COLTON

THE SPIRAL STONE

BY ARTHUR COLTON

THE graveyard on the brow of the hill was white with snow. The marbles were white, the evergreens black. One tall spiral stone stood painfully near the centre. The little brown church outside the gates turned its face in the more comfortable direction of the village.

Only three were out among the graves: "Ambrose Chillingworth, ætat 30, 1675"; "Margaret Vane, ætat 19, 1839"; and "Thy Little One, O God, ætat 2," from the Mercer Lot. It is called the "Mercer Lot," but the Mercers are all dead or gone from the village.

The Little One trotted around busily, putting his tiny finger in the lettering and patting the faces of the cherubs. The other two sat on the base of the spiral, which twisted in the moonlight over them.

"I wonder why it is?" Margaret said. "Most of them never come out at all. We and the Little One come out so often. You were wise and learned. I knew so little. Will you tell me?"

"Learning is not wisdom," Ambrose answered.

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"But of this matter it was said that our containment in the grave depended on the spirit in which we departed. I made certain researches. It appeared by common report that only those came out whom desperate sin tormented, or labors incomplete and great desire at the point of death made restless. I had doubts the matter were more subtle, the reasons of it reaching out distantly." He sighed faintly, following with his eyes, tomb by tomb, the broad white path that dropped down the hillside to the church. "I desired greatly to live."

"I too. Is it because we desired it so much, then? But the Little One—"

"I do not know," he said.

The Little One trotted gravely here and there, seeming to know very well what he was about, and presently came to the spiral stone. The lettering on it was new, and there was no cherub. He dropped down suddenly on the snow with a faint whimper. His small feet came out from under his gown, as he sat upright gazing at the letters with round troubled eyes, and up to the top of the monument, for the solution of some unstated problem.

"The stone is but newly placed," said Ambrose, "and the new-comer would seem to be of those who rest in peace."

They went and sat down on either side of him, on the snow. The peculiar cutting of the stone, with spirally ascending lines, together with the

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moon's illusion, gave it a semblance of motion. Something twisted and climbed continually, and vanished continually from the point. But the base was broad, square, and heavily lettered: "John Mareschelli Vane."

"Vane? That was thy name," said Ambrose,

1890. ÆTAT 72.

AN EMINENT CITIZEN, A PUBLIC BENEFAC-
TOR AND WIDELY ESTEEMED.

FOR THE LOVE OF HIS NATIVE PLACE RE-
TURNED TO LAY HIS DUST THEREIN.

THE JUST MADE PERFECT.

"It would seem he did well and rounded his labors to a goodly end, lying down among his kindred as a sheaf that is garnered in the autumn. He was fortunate."

And Margaret spoke, in the thin, emotionless voice which those who are long in the graveyard use: "He was my brother."

"Thy brother?" said Ambrose.

The Little One looked up and down the spiral with wide eyes. The other two looked past it into the deep white valley, where the river, covered with ice and snow, was marked only by the lines of skeleton willows and poplars. A night wind, listless but continual, stirred the evergreens. The moon swung low over the opposite hills, and for a moment slipped behind a cloud.

"Says it is not so, 'For the Love of his Native Place'?" murmured Ambrose.

And as the moon came out, there leaned against

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the pedestal, pointing with a finger at the epitaph, one that seemed an old man, with bowed shoulders and keen, restless face, but in his manner cowed and weary.

"It is a lie," he said slowly. "I hated it, Margaret. I came because Ellen Mercer called me."

"Ellen isn't buried here."

"Not here?"

"Not here."

"Was it you, then, Margaret? Why?"

"I didn't call you."

"Who then?" he shrieked. "Who called me?"

The night wind moved on monotonously, and the moonlight was undisturbed, like glassy water.

"When I came away," she said, "I thought you would marry her. You didn't, then? But why should she call you?"

"I left the village suddenly!" he cried. "I grew to dread and then to hate it. I buried myself from the knowledge of it, and the memory of it was my enemy. I wished for a distant death, and these fifty years have heard the summons to come and lay my bones in this graveyard. I thought it was Ellen. You, sir, wear an antique dress; you have been long in this strange existence. Can you tell who called me? If not Ellen, where is Ellen?" He wrung his hands, and rocked to and fro.

"The mystery is with the dead as with the living," said Ambrose. "The shadows of the future and the past come among us. We look in their

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eyes, and understand them not. Now and again there is a call even here, and the grave is henceforth untenanted of its spirit. Here, too, we know a necessity which binds us, which speaks not with audible voice and will not be questioned."

"But tell me," moaned the other, "does the weight of sin depend upon its consequences? Then what weight do I bear? I do not know whether it was ruin or death, or a thing gone by and forgotten. Is there no answer here to this?"

"Death is but a step in the process of life," answered Ambrose. "I know not if any are ruined or anything forgotten. Look up, to the order of the stars, and handwriting on the wall of the firmament. But who hath read it? Mark this night wind, a still small voice. But what speaketh it? The earth is clothed in white garments as a bride. What mean the ceremonials of the seasons? The will from without is only known as it is manifested. Nor does it manifest where the consequences of the deed end or its causes began. Have they any end or a beginning? I can not answer you."

"Who called me, Margaret?"

And she said again monotonously:

"I didn't call you."

The Little One sat between Ambrose and Margaret, chuckling to himself and gazing up at the new-comer, who suddenly bent forward and looked into his eyes, with a gasp.

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"What is this?" he whispered.

"'Thy Little One, O God, ætat 2,' from the Mercer Lot," returned Ambrose gently.

"He is very quiet. Art not neglecting thy business, Little One? The lower walks are unvisited to-night."

"They are Ellen's eyes!" cried the other, moaning and rocking. "Did you call me? Were you mine?"

"It is written, 'Thy Little One, O God,' " murmured Ambrose.

But the Little One only curled his feet up under his gown, and now chuckled contentedly.

JEAN MICHAUD'S LITTLE SHIP

BY CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS

JEAN MICHAUD'S LITTLE SHIP

BY CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS

PATIENTLY, doggedly, yet with the light in his eyes that belongs to the enthusiast and the dreamer, young Jean Michaud had worked at it. Throughout the winter he had hewed the seasoned timbers and the diminutive hackmatack "knees" from the swamp far back in the Equille Valley; and whenever the sledding was good with his yoke of black oxen he had hauled his materials to the secret place of his shipbuilding by the winding shore of a deep tidal tributary of the Port Royal. In the spring he had laid the keel and riveted securely to it the squared hackmatack knees. It was unusual to use such sturdy and unmanageable timbers as these hackmatack knees for a craft so small as this which the young Acadian was building; but Jean Michaud's thoughts were long thoughts and went far ahead. He was putting all his hopes as well as all his scant patrimony into this little ship; and he was resolved that it should be strong to carry his fortunes.

Through all the green and blue and golden

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GREATEST SHORT STORIES

Acadian summer he had toiled joyously at bending the thin planks and riveting them soundly to the ribs, the stem and the sternpost. It was hot work, but white and savory, the clean spruce planks that he wrought with breathing sweet scents to his lungs as adze and chisel and saw set free the tonic spirit of their fibres. His chips soon spread a yellow carpet over the mossy sward and the tree-roots. The yellow sides of his graceful craft presently arose high among the green kissing branches of the water-ash and Indian pear. The tawny golden shimmering current of the creek lipped up at high tide close under the stern of the little ship and set afloat the lowest layers of the chips; while at ebb a gleaming abyss of red mud with walls sloping sharply to a mere rivulet at their foot seemed to tempt the structure to a premature launching and a wild swooping rush to oozy doom. Very secluded, far apart from beaten highway or forest byway, and quite aside from all the river traffic, was the place of Jean Michaud's shipbuilding. And so it came about that the clear ringing blows of his adze, the sharp staccato of his diligent hammer and the strident crying of his saw brought no answer but the chatter of the striped chipmunks among the near tree-roots, or the scolding of the garrulous and inquisitive red squirrels from the branches overhead. At the quiet of the noon hour, while Jean lay in the shade contemplating his handiwork, and weaving his many-colored dreams, and

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munching his brown-bread cakes and pale cheese, the clucking partridge hen would lead her brood out to investigate the edges of the chip-strewn open, where insects gathered in the heat. And afterward, when once more Jean's hammering set up its brisk and cheerful echoes, the big golden-wing woodpeckers would promptly accept the sound as a challenge, and begin an emulous rat-tat-tat-tat-ing on the resonant sound-board of a dead beech not far off.

By the time the partridge brood had taken to whirring up into the maple branches when alarmed, instead of scurrying to cover in the underbrush, the hull was completed; and a smell of smoking pitch drowned the woodsy odors as Jean calked the seams. Then the pale yellow of the timbers no more shone through the reddening leafage, but a sombre black bulk loomed impressively above the chips, daunting the squirrels for a few days with its strange shadow. By the time of the moose-calling, when the rowan-berries hung in great scarlet bunches and half the red leafage was turning brown, and the pale gold birch leaves fell in fluttering showers at every gust, two slim masts had raised their tops above the trees, and a white bowsprit was thrusting its nose into the branches of the nearest red maple. Under the bowsprit glittered a carved and gilded Madonna, the most auspicious figure-head to which, in Jean's eyes, he could intrust the fortunes of his handiwork. A few days more

and the ship was done—so nearly complete that three or four hours of work would make her ready for sea. Being so small, it was feasible to launch her in this advanced state of equipment; and the conditions under which she had been built made it necessary that she should be prepared to hurry straight from the greased ways of the launching to the security of the open sea. The tidal creek in which she would first take water could give her no safe harborage; and once out of the creek she would have to make all speed, under cover of night, till Port Royal River and the sodded ramparts of Annapolis town should be left many miles astern.

Having made his preparations and gathered his materials far ahead, and devised his precautions with subtlety, and accustomed his neighbors to the idea that he was an erratic youth, given to long absences and futile schemes, not worth gossip, Jean had succeeded in keeping his enterprise a secret from all but two persons. These two, deep in his counsels from the first, were Barbe Dieudonné, his sweetheart, and Mich' Masson, his friend and ally.

Mich' Masson—whose home, which served him best as a place to stay away from, was in the village of Grand Pré, far up on the Basin of Minas—had been Jean's close friend since early boyhood, in the days before Port Royal town had been captured by the English and found its name changed to Annapolis. He was a daring ad-

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venturer, hunter, woods-ranger, an implacable partisan of the French cause, and just now deeply interested in the traffic between Acadie and the new French fortress city of Louisburg—a traffic which the English Governor was angrily determined to break up. Mich' Masson could sail a ship as well as set a dead-fall or lay an ambush. He had kept bright in Jean's heart the flame of hatred against the English conquerors of Acadie. It was he who had come to the aid of Jean's shipbuilding from time to time, when timbers had to be put in place which were too heavy for one pair of hands to work with. It was, indeed, at his suggestion that Jean had finally decided to sell his cottage on the outskirts of Annapolis town—secretly to build his little ship for the forbidden traffic—and to settle under the walls of Louisburg, where the flag he loved should always wave over his roof-tree.

Mademoiselle Barbe, under a disguise of indifference which sometimes reduced Jean to the not unprofitable condition wherein hard work is the sole refuge from despair, hid a passionate interest in her lover's undertaking. She, too, hated the new domination. She, too, chafed to escape from Annapolis and take up life anew under her old Flag of the Fleur-de-lis. Moreover, her restless and fiery spirit could accept no contented tiller of green Acadian acres for a mate; and she was resolved that Jean's courageous heart and stirring dreams should trans-

late themselves into action. She would have him not only the daring dreamer but the daring doer—the successful smuggler, the shrewd foiler of the English watch-dogs, the admired and consulted partisan leader. That he had it in him to be all these things she felt utterly convinced; but she proposed that the debilitating effects of too much happiness should have no chance of postponing his success. Her keen watchfulness detected every weak spot in Jean's enterprise, every unguarded point in his secret; and her two-edged mockery, which seemed as careless and inconsequent as the wind, at once accomplished the effects she had in view. Her fickleness of mood, her bewildering caprice, were the iridescent foam-bubbles veiling a deep and steady current. She knew that she loved Jean's love for her, of which she felt as certain as dawn does of the sunrise. She had a suspicion in the deep of her heart that she might be in love with Jean himself; but of this she was in no haste to be assured.

Thus the wonder came to pass that Jean's secret, though known to three people, yet remained so long a secret. Had the English Governor, behind his sodded ramparts overlooking the tide, got wind of it, never would Jean Michaud's little ship have sailed the open, save with an English captain and an English crew.

Early in the afternoon, on a day of mid-October, Jean stepped down the ladder which

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leaned against the starboard bow of his ship, and contemplated with satisfaction the name, "Mon Rêve," which he had just painted in strong, gold lettering. The exultation in his eyes became a passion of love and worship, as he turned to the slim girl who lay curled up luxuriously on a pile of dried ferns, watching him.

"Since you won't let me name her directly after you, that is the nearest I can come to it, Barbe," he said. "You can't find fault with that. You are my dream—and all else besides."

For a moment she watched him in silence. Her figure was of a childish slenderness, and there was a childish abandon in her attitude. The small hands crossed idly in her lap were very dark and thin and long-fingered, with rosy nails. She was dressed in skirt and bodice of the creamy Acadian homespun linen, the skirt reaching not quite to her slim ankles. Her mouth was full and red, half sorrowful, half mocking. Her face, small and rather thin, was tanned to a clear, dark brown, and of a type that suggested a strain of the ancient blood of the Basques. The thick black masses of her hair, with a rebel wave in them, and here and there a glint of flame, half covered her little ears and were gathered into a knot at the back of her neck. The brim of her low-crowned hat of quilted linen was tilted far down to shade her face; and her eyes, very green and clear and large, made a bewildering brilliance in the shadow.

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The light in her eyes softened presently, and she said in a low voice:

"Poor boy, a very sharp reality you find me most of the time, I'm afraid."

For this unexpected utterance Jean had no words of answer ready, but his look was a sufficiently eloquent refutation. He took a few eager steps toward her; then, reading inhibition in the sudden gravity of her mouth, he stopped.

"Day after to-morrow, about sundown," said he, "our Lady and St. Joseph permitting, we will get her launched. The tide will be full then, and we will run down with it, and pass the fort before moonrise. If the wind's fair we will get out of the Basin and off to sea that same night; but if it fails us there'll be tide enough to get us round the Island and into a hidden anchorage in Hibert River. Then—a cargo of Acadian beef and barley for Louisburg! And then—money! And then—and then—you!"

He looked at her with pleading and longing in his eyes, but with a doggedness about his mouth which told of much pain endured and a determination which might bide its time, indeed, but would not be balked. The look of the mouth she was conscious of, deep down in her heart, and she in reality rested upon it; but it was the look in his eyes which she answered. She answered it lightly. A mocking smile played about the corners of her lips and her eyes sparkled upon

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him whimsically. The look both repulsed and invited him.

"Don't be too sure of—me!" she said at last. And his face fell—not so much at the words themselves as at their discouraging accent.

"But," he protested, "it is all planned, all done, just for you, Barbe. There is nothing in it at all, except you. It is all you. That is understood between us from the first.

Still her mouth mocked him; and still her eyes gleamed upon him with their enigmatic light.

"You will have your beautiful little ship," she said slowly. "You will have wonderful adventures—and little time to think of me at all. You will make a wonderful deal of money. You will make your name famous and hated among these English. I expect you to do great things. But as for me—I am not won yet, Jean."

His eyes glowed upon her, and the lines of his face set themselves with a sudden masterfulness. He gave a little, soft laugh.

"You are mine! You will be my wife before I make my second voyage."

"If you believe that, you ought to be a very happy man," she retorted, and her smile softened almost imperceptibly as she said it. "You don't look quite as happy as you ought to, Jean!"

"*Don't* make me wait for my second voyage! Let me take you away from this unhappy country. Come with me—come with me now!"

He spoke swiftly, his voice thick with the sud-

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den outburst of passion long held in check; and he strode forward to catch her in his arms.

Instantaneous as a darting bird, or a flash of light on a wave, she was up from her resting-place and away behind the pile of grass.

"Stay there!" she commanded, "or I'll go home at once!" And Jean stayed.

She laughed at him gayly, mercilessly.

"Would you have me take you on trust, Jean?" she questioned, with her head on one side. "How do I know that you are going to be brave enough to fight the English, or clever enough to outwit them? How do I know you will really do the great things I'm expecting of you? I know your dreams are fine, Boy; but you must show me deeds."

"I will," he answered quietly. "Come here, Sweet, just for one minute!"

"No," she said with a very positive shake of her small head. "You must go on with your work. You have more to do yet than you realize. And *I've* something to do, too. I must go home at once."

"That's not fair, Barbe!" he pleaded.

"I don't care! It is good for you. No, don't come one step with me. Not one step. Go on with your work. I'm going to fly."

She ran lightly across the chips, at a safe distance from Jean's outstretched arms, and turned into the trail among the maples. There she paused, gave her lover one melting, caressing,

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but still half-mocking glance, and cried to him: "I am making a flag for 'Mon Rêve,' and it's not *nearly* done yet, Jean."

Then she disappeared among the branches.

With a tumult in his heart Jean turned back to his ladder and paint-pot. Little twinges of angry disappointment ran along his nerves, only to be smothered straightway in a flood of passionate tenderness.

"Next voyage, anyway!" he muttered to himself as he worked feverishly. "I couldn't *live* longer than that without her!" And he went over and over in his imagination every detail of the girl's appearance, the changing moods of her face, her hair, her hands, the tones of her voice.

Along the trail through the autumn maples, meanwhile Mademoiselle Barbe was speeding on light feet. The little smile was gone from the corners of her mouth, and into her eyes, now that Jean could no longer see them, was come a great gentleness. Her mockery, her impatience, her picturesque asperity were a kind of game which she played with herself, to disguise, sometimes even from herself, the greatness and the oversensitiveness of her heart. At this moment she was feeling sore at the nearness of Jean's departure, and was conscious of the pressure of his will urging her to go with him. This she was resolved she would not do; but she was equally resolved that her flag should be ready and go in her place. As for the next voyage—well, she

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thought to herself that Jean might persuade her by that time, if he tried hard. As to his success she had not really a grain of doubt. She knew well enough the quality of his fibre. Her light feet, as she hurried, made hardly a sound upon the soft mould of the trail, which was half-hidden by the bright autumn carpeting of the leaves. But presently she heard the noise of heavier foot-falls approaching. Just ahead of her the trail turned sharply. Peering through the tangle of branches and thinned leafage, she caught glimpses of something that caused her face to grow pale, her heart to throb up into her throat; and she stepped behind the thick shelter of a fir bush to consider what was to be done.

The sight that so disturbed her was in itself no terrible one. A tall, ruddy-faced, keen-eyed man, carelessly dressed, but of erect, military bearing, came striding up the trail, a gun over his arm, a brown dog at his heels. Barbe recognized him at once—the English officer in command of the fort at Annapolis. She saw that he was out for partridges—but she saw, also, that he was walking at a pace that would speedily devour the scant two miles that divided him from the shipyard of “*Mon Rêve*.” It was evident that he had forgotten his shooting in his interest in this unknown trail upon which he had stumbled. If he went on the game was up for Jean’s little ship!

She resolved that he should not go on. It took

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her just five seconds to decide the whole question. There was a large fallen tree close beside the trail, two or three paces from where she hid. Over this she threw herself discreetly, with a little scream, and lay moaning beside it.

The Englishman darted forward and was at her side in a moment, bending over her with a mingling of alarm and admiration in his gray eyes.

"Mademoiselle," he cried, "what has happened? Are you much hurt?"

Receiving no answer, but more faint moans, he lifted her gently and stood her on her feet; but the instant he released her she collapsed upon the leaves, an appealing but intoxicating confusion of skirts, and slim brown hands, and crinkly dark hair, and the corner of a red mouth, and the glimpse of an ankle.

"Mademoiselle! Tell me what is the matter. Tell me what can I do. Let me do something, I beg of you!" Lifting her again, he seated her beside him on the fallen tree; and this time he did not at once release her. At first, her eyes closed and her face a little drawn as with pain, she clung instinctively to his arm, with hands that seemed to him the most maddening that he had ever seen. Then, after several minutes which were very agreeable to him in spite of his anxiety, she appeared to pull herself together with a mighty effort. She moved away from his clasp, sat up straight, and opened upon him great eyes of pain and gratitude.

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"Oh, thank you, Monsieur!" she said simply. "I'm afraid I have been very troublesome. But, indeed, I thought I was going to die."

"But what is the matter, Mademoiselle? Tell me, and let me help you."

She sat cringing and setting her teeth hard. He noticed how white were the teeth, how scarlet the full lips.

"It is just my heart," she said. "I was looking through the bushes to see who was coming. Something startled me, I think; and the pain clutched at my heart so I could not breathe, and I fell off."

She paused, to moan a little softly and catch her breath. Before he could say anything she went on: "It's better now, but it hurts horribly."

"Let me support you, Mademoiselle," he urged with eager courtesy.

But she shrank away from the approaching ministration.

"No, Monsieur, I am better, really. But I must get home as quick as I can." She arose unsteadily.

The Englishman arose at the same time. The next moment Barbe sank back again, biting her lips to keep back a cry.

"Oh," she gasped, "I *can't* stand it! How can I get home?"

"You must let me see you home, Mademoiselle," said the officer, authority blending with palpable enthusiasm in his tones.

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"You are so good, Monsieur," she murmured gratefully. "But I could not think of taking you away back so far, almost to the village. It will spoil your afternoon's sport."

The sympathy of the Englishman's face gave way to amusement, and he hastened to assure her of her mistake.

"Not at all, indeed, Mademoiselle. It will be quite as much my pleasure as my duty to see you safely home. Your misfortune—if not too serious—is my great good fortune!"

Thanking him with a look, Barbe arose weakly and took the proffered arm. At first the homeward journey was very slow; but as the afternoon deepened, and the miles gathered between the English commandant and Jean's little ship, the girl began to let herself recover. By this time she felt that there was no danger of her escort leaving her one minute before he was obliged to; and she knew that now, for this night, the ship was safe. At last, as they emerged from the woods into a high pasture-ground, behind the cottage where Barbe lived with her aunt and uncle, the Englishman threw off the gallant for a moment and became the wide-awake officer. He paused, took his bearings carefully, and scrutinized the trail behind him with searching eyes.

"I have not seen this road before, Mademoiselle," he remarked, "and it interests me. It is not down on our map of the Annapolis district. Whither does it lead, may I ask?"

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Barbe's heart grew faint within her; but she answered lightly, with a look that somehow conveyed to him the impression that he should not be interested in roads when she was by.

"They haul wood over it, my uncle and his neighbors, in the winter," she answered, "and black mud in summer from the swamp.

The Englishman appeared satisfied; but she felt that his curiosity was aroused, and with all her arts she strove to divert his thoughts exclusively to herself. She succeeded in this to a degree that presently began to stir her apprehensiveness, and at her doorway she made her grateful farewells a trifle hurried. But the Englishman would listen to nothing more discouraging than *au revoir*. At last he said:

"I shall be shooting over these woods again to-morrow"—Barbe clutched hard upon the latch and held her breath—"and shall give myself the pleasure of calling to ask after—but no!" he corrected himself. "You are making me forget. I have a council-meeting to fill my day with drudgery to-morrow." (Barbe breathed again at this respite.) "I must deny myself till the day after. I may call then, may I not?"

There was a moment's pause, and in that moment the girl's swift brain made its decision.

"Certainly, Monsieur le Commandant," she said, sweeping his face with a brilliant glance that made his nerves tingle sweetly; "I shall be much honored. My aunt and I will be much

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honored!" And with a curtsy half mocking, half formal, she slipped into the house.

"By—Jove!" muttered the Englishman, as he strode away in a daze.

From the window, behind the bean vines, Barbe watched him go. The instant he was out of sight she darted from the door, sped swiftly over the rough pasture-lot, and disappeared among the twilights of the trail, where the afternoon shadows were already darkening to purple. She ran with the endurance of health and practice and a clean-breathing outdoor life; but presently her breath began to fail, her heart to thump madly against her slim sides. Then—around a bend of the trail came Jean, returning earlier than his wont. With an exclamation of glad surprise he sprang forward to meet her. Still more was his surprise when she caught him by the shoulders with both hands and leaned, gasping and sobbing, against his breast.

After one fierce clasp he held her lightly like a child, and anxiously scanned her face.

"What is it, Barbe, beloved? What is the matter?" he questioned eagerly.

"The ship," she panted, "must go! You must go—*to-morrow* night!"

"Why? But it is impossible!" he protested, bewildered. "Mich' won't be here till the day after—and one man can't launch her, and can't sail her all by himself."

"I tell you, it must be done," she cried im-

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periously. "You must, you must!" And then, in a few edged words, she explained the situation. "If you can't, all is lost," she concluded, "for they will discover you, and seize the ship, the day after to-morrow. Jean, I would never believe that you had any such word as 'can't.' "

By this time Jean's face was white and his jaw was set.

"Of course," he said quietly, "it will be done somehow. I'm not beaten till I'm dead. But the chances are, Sweet, that after I get the little ship launched I'll run her aground somewhere down the river, and be caught next day like a rat in a barrel. It's ticklish navigating at best, down the river, and one man can't rightly manage even the foresail alone, and steer. But—"

"But, Jean—" she interrupted, and then paused, and looking up at him with eyes that seemed to him to make a brightness in the dark.

"But what, beautiful one?" he questioned, leaning his face over her.

"I can help! Take me!" And she hid her eyes against his rough shirt-sleeve.

For one moment Jean stood tense, moveless, unable to apprehend this sudden realization of his dreams. Then he swung her light figure up into his arms, and covered her face and hair with kisses. With a little smile of content upon her lips she suffered his madness for a while. Then she made him put her down.

"There is no time now to make love to me,"

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she said. "We've so much to do and plan. You've never run away with a ship and a girl before, Jean, and we must make sure you know just how to go about it."

That night Barbe snatched a few hours of sleep, being mindful of the witchery of her eyes. But Jean toiled all night long, driving his yoke of oxen to and fro between his cabin and his shipyard in the forest. And he was not weary. His heart was light as air and sang with every pulse. His strength and his star—he felt them equal to any crisis.

On the following afternoon, when it wanted yet an hour of high tide, and the shadows of the maples were beginning to creep over the yellow chips, all was ready. Full of a wild gayety, and untiring as a boy, Barbe had worked all day, getting the sails bent, the stores on board, the last of block and tackle into place. Suddenly, from a post of vantage in the high-pointing bowsprit, she looked down the trail and clapped her brown hands with a shout of delight.

"Mich' has come!" she cried. And Mich' Masson, striding into the open, threw down a big red bundle on the chips.

"Pretty nigh ready?" he inquired. "Why, what is the matter, *mon gar'*?"

Jean's face had fallen like his heart. There was no longer any necessity of Barbe's sharing his adventure.

"We've got to get away to-night," he stam-

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mered, struggling bravely to make his voice sound cheerful. "The English are coming over here to-morrow to find out what's going on—so it's time for us to be going off! Barbe was to help me through with it."

Mich' held to Jean's hand, and glanced questioningly from his troubled face to the girl's teasing one. But Barbe had burned her bridges and saw no reason to be unmerciful.

"I suppose I'll have to be just crew and cabin-boy now, Mich'," she pouted. "Jean was going to let me be first mate, and there wasn't to be any crew."

A great joy broke over Jean's face, and Mich' removed his gray woolen cap with a sweeping bow. But before either could reply there came from a little way up the trail the excited yapping as of a dog that has treed a partridge. The three looked at each other, their eyes wide with apprehension. Then the report of a gun.

"The Englishman!" gasped Barbe. "He has not waited. Quick, hide, one each side of the trail, and take him prisoner. Don't shoot him. He was kind to me."

Jean snatched up his musket and the two men darted into the bush. By a rope from the bulwarks Barbe swung herself lightly to the ground. In haste she crossed the chip-strewn open, and then, carelessly swinging her hat in her hand, and singing a fitful snatch of song, she sauntered up the trail to meet the intruder.

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The trail wound rapidly, so that before she had gone twoscore paces the ship was hid from her view. A few steps more and the Englishman came in sight, swinging forward alertly, a fluff of brown feathers dangling from his right hand. He was face to face with Barbe; and the delighted astonishment that came into his eyes was dashed with a faint chill of suspicion.

"How fate favors me, Mademoiselle!" he exclaimed, doffing his cap. "Gad, you are a brave girl to wander so far into the woods alone!"

"No, Monsieur, fate does not favor you," retorted Barbe with a sort of intimate petulance, holding out her brown fingers. "You had no business coming to-day when you said you were not coming till to-morrow. Now, you are going to find out a secret of mine which I didn't want any one to find out."

"But you are not angry at seeing me," he protested.

"N-n-o-o!" she answered, her head upon one side in doubt, while she bewildered him with her eyes. "But I'm sorry in a way! Well, come and I'll show you. Forgive me for lying to you yesterday about this road!"

And she turned to accompany him, walking very close to his side, so that her slim shoulder touched his arm and blurred his sagacity.

The next instant came the sharp order: "Halt! Don't stir, or you're dead!"

The Englishman found himself facing two lev-

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eled muskets. At the same moment his own weapon went flying into the underbrush, twitched from his hold by a catch of Barbe's fingers.

He stood still and very straight, his arms at his sides, eying his assailants steadily. His first impulse was to dart upon them with his naked hands; but he saw the well-knit form of Jean, almost his own height, the lean, set face, a certain exultation in the eyes which he read aright; and he saw the shrewd, dark, confident look of Mich', the experienced master of situations. The red mounted slowly to his face, and he turned upon Barbe a look wherein reproach at once gave way to scorn and a kind of shame.

Barbe herself flushed under that look.

"You wrong me, Monsieur!" she cried impetuously. "I did it to save you. You are a brave man, and would have tried to fight, and they would have killed you!"

He bowed stiffly and turned to the men.

"What do you want of me?"

"Your parole!" said Jean. "Give us your word that you will come with us quietly, making no resistance and no effort to escape."

The Englishman shut his lips doggedly.

"Then you must be bound," said Mich' with curt decision. "We've no time to waste."

"Let *me* bind you, Monsieur," said Barbe, taking his wrists gently. "It is no dishonor to be captive to a woman."

With a silk scarf from her waist, and a fem-

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inine cunning in knots, she quickly tied his hands together so that he felt himself quite hopeless of escape. Then, in a cold wrath, he was led forward, with no constraint but Barbe's touch upon his arm. The ship, high on her stocks, came into view. And he understood.

Seating him upon a log, with his back against a tree, Mich' passed a rope about his waist and made him fast to the trunk. There he sat and chewed his indignation, while his captors went in haste about their work. But presently he grew interested. He saw the blocks knocked out from under the little ship's sides, so that she came down upon the greased ways and slid smoothly into the flood. He saw her checked gradually by a rope turned once around a tree trunk, so that she was kept from running aground on the opposite side of the Basin. He saw a small boat dragged down from the bushes to the edge of the tide, and oars put into it. By this time he had revolved many aspects of the case in his mind. Then came to him Barbe and Jean.

"Monsieur," said Jean, "I regret to have inconvenienced you in this way. But you would without mercy have wrecked all my hopes. I have put all my means into this little ship, built with my own hands. My heart is set on removing from the land of Acadie, to live once more under my own flag of France. But I do not wish to take you a prisoner to Louisburg, or to put you to any further annoyance. To Mademoiselle

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Dieudonné you showed yourself yesterday a most kind and courteous gentleman. All Acadie knows you are brave. Give me your word that you will in no way seek to stop or hinder our departure, and let me set you free!"

"Give your parole, Monsieur!" begged Barbe, "or you will have to devote yourself to entertaining me all the way to Louisburg."

The Englishman's face brightened.

"Almost you make me wish to go to Louisburg, Mademoiselle. With the duty you apportion me I should be much happier, I assure you, than here in Annapolis trying to govern your good fellow-countrymen. But I will give my parole. I promise you, sir," and he turned his face to Jean, "that I will not interfere with the departure of you and your ship from Acadie."

"Thank you," said Jean, and he undid the rope and the scarf.

The Englishman arose, walked down to the waterside with Barbe, and with elaborate courtesy helped her into the boat. He bent his lips over her hand as he said good-by.

Turning upon him then a laughing face of farewell, Barbe cried:

"Never, never will I pardon you, Monsieur, for consenting to give your parole!"

"Mademoiselle," he answered, "I am your prisoner still, and always."

AT THE END OF HIS ROPE

BY FLORENCE MORSE KINGSLEY

AT THE END OF HIS ROPE

BY FLORENCE MORSE KINGSLEY

I

MR. PERCY ALGERNON SMITH, familiarly known as "Cinnamon" Smith, thrust his hands deeper into his trousers pockets. "I am not going," he remarked with an air of decision.

"Not going!" cried the joint proprietors of Lone Pine Camp in a chorus. "Not going! Why?"

Mr. Smith vouchsafed no immediate reply; he had fixed an experienced eye upon the coffee-pot, which at the moment threatened to inundate the camp-fire with its furious contents. "Here, you, Jake," he said peremptorily; "the coffee's boiling over!"

The campers at Lone Pine were on the point of starting out for an all-day's fishing excursion up Sunday Brook. It may as well be explained right here that the party consisted of four undergraduates of C—— University who were temporarily pursuing their education in the bracing air of the Adirondacks.

That these young gentlemen were thus stu-

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diously engaged during that portion of the year commonly exempt from mental pursuits argues nothing. Great minds have ever been remarkable for concentration of purpose; and everybody knows that the late football, rowing, and bicycle seasons were of unusual and engrossing interest. It is to be hoped that a future and more enlightened generation will so arrange the dull and comparatively unimportant scholastic pursuits that they shall not clash with live interests. In a word, to quote from their own forceful if inelegant phraseology—Messrs. “Cinnamon” Smith, “Piggy” Brewster, “Herodotus” Jones, and “Tommy” Pettigrew had been “plucked” in their examinations, and were now “cramming” with more or less enthusiasm and diligence under the able direction of Prof. John Gearing.

Mr. Smith’s announcement occasioned considerable badinage of a personal and even damaging nature, all of which was received by that young man with commendable stoicism and equanimity.

“Cin’s lazy!” drawled “Piggy” Brewster, as he ensconced himself comfortably in the stern of the boat, armed with the lightest paddle.

“Cinnamon’s going to write to his best girl!” shouted Herodotus Jones, shying a mighty quid of spruce-gum at the auburn head of the young gentleman on the shore. “Do it in poetry on birch-bark, old boy! Little wavelets a-kissin’

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the beach; green leaves all whisperin' of thee; my heart a-tremblin' with rapture at the call of the lone loon across the moonlit waters! Hey, Cin?"

"Aw—get along with you!" growled the recipient of these graceful sallies. I'm going to bone all day on Greek—that's what I'm going to do."

A burst of derisive laughter greeted this saying. Then the boat shot out into the sparkling waters of Beaver Lake, and speedily disappeared behind the wooded island.

Left to himself, it appeared that Mr. Smith had not remained behind to indulge in solitary ease, for no sooner did the last echo of oars and voices die away than he fell to work with extraordinary energy and diligence. He swept out the camp—being not over-particular as to corners—gathering in the process a goodly heap of bacon-rinds, egg-shells, torn paper, and tin cans, which he bestowed in the bushes. A motley array of old shoes of various sizes, four and one-half pairs of ragged socks, a nondescript assortment of party-colored garments in various stages of dilapidation were retired, in company with the camp frying-pan, to a dark corner under the bunks, this position being further defended by an artistic arrangement of balsam boughs. As a finishing touch, two pairs of muddy trousers, a half-emptied tin of condensed milk—to the wrath and discomfiture of an industrious swarm

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of Adirondack flies—and three dog-eared novels followed the bacon-rinds into the comfortable obscurity of the huckleberry bushes.

Mr. Smith paused long enough to wipe his heated brow. "It looks pretty slick," he murmured approvingly. "And now for the grub; girls are always hungry."

A rapid but thoughtful investigation of the camp cupboard ensued, with the following-named results: item—two small and somewhat wizened lemons; item—one damp and dubious paper bag, containing ginger-snaps minus the snap; item—one box of marshmallows.

"The lemonade'll be on the Sunday-school-picnic order," meditated the youth, as he surveyed these tempting articles with a doubtful grimace; "and the less said about the snaps the better; but they'll cotton to the marshmallows all right.—Jerusalem crickets! there they are now, t'other side of the lake, and I haven't even washed my hands!"

Exactly seven minutes later, Mr. Percy Algeron Smith, arrayed in a golf suit of the latest fashionable cut and an immaculate flannel shirt, set off by a necktie of flaming red—which, he flattered himself, subdued the tint of his auburn locks to a positive brown—sauntered jauntily down to the boat-landing.

"How de do, Miss Daisy! (Jove, but she's a stunner, and no mistake!) Glad to see you, Miss Terrill! Won't you come ashore?"

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The elder of the two young persons in the boat hesitated; but the one addressed as Miss Daisy was on her feet in a twinkling.

"Just for an instant, Kate!" she said deprecatingly. "What a *sweet* place for a camp—ours isn't nearly so pretty!—Lemonade?" went on this sprightly damsel, fanning her flushed face with a big green fan; "yes, indeed, and it's awfully kind of you to think of it, Mr. Smith! Aren't you thirsty, Kate?"

The person addressed as Kate looked about her tentatively. "It certainly is a very pretty place," she said sedately; "but we ought not to stop, Margaret."

"The fellows are all off on the trail to Sunday Brook," remarked the astute Mr. Smith, setting out three glasses on the pine board which did duty as a table. "They won't be back before evening. The old man's out bug-hunting."

"Who is the old man?" cried Miss Margaret with an irrelevant gurgle of laughter. "And bug-hunting—ugh! Who ever heard of such a thing!"

"Oh, I mean Gearing! He's bossing the cramming for exams.," replied Mr. Smith with elegant brevity. "Two lumps of sugar, or three, Miss Daisy?"

"Three, please. Is he married?"

"Married! Who—the old man? Ha! ha!—that's a good one! Why, Miss Daisy, Gearing never even looks at anything but books and bugs,

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and is more afraid of a pretty girl than he'd be of a boa constrictor!"

"The idea! How funny! Kate, do look at that big spool up there on the tree! What is that for, Mr. Smith?"

"That spool? Aw—that's another of Gearing's notions. He likes to get off all by himself after his bugs—don't want even a guide along to bother him. So he ties up one end of a string in camp and unwinds a monstrous spool as he goes along. When he gets through with his investigations he winds up, and the string brings him into camp again as right as a trivet. See?"

"The very idea!"

"Bright man!" chorused the fair voyagers.

"His spools hold a mile of string, and he generally carries his pockets full of 'em," pursued Mr. Smith, gallantly presenting a toasted marshmallow to each of his guests. "You can bet the fellows don't raise many objections to his travels!—I say, Miss Margaret," he added guilelessly, "don't you want some pink water-lilies? I know where there's a grist of 'em—beauties too."

"You go, Margaret," said Miss Terrill indulgently; "I'll stop here and rest. I'm too deliciously comfortable to move."

And producing a volume from the pocket of her jacket, the young lady settled back in her luxurious chair—cunningly fashioned out of a barrel and a piece of burlap—with the air of an experienced chaperon.

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Before proceeding further with this narrative, it must be distinctly understood that Miss Katherine Terrill was a young person in whose veins ran certain saving streams of genuine blue blood. Not only was she a Colonial dame by virtue of both lines of descent, but through her maternal grandmother she was still further linked with greatness in a manner which defied question.

To quote the often-repeated admonition of Madam Carter Stockard herself, "You must never forget, my dear Katherine, what your position as a descendant of Col. Brayton Carter, of Virginia, implies."

"I should require a memory as long as that of Methuselah, dear grandmama, if I remembered all that it implies," was the somewhat flippant answer.

"I am grieved and astonished, my dear Katherine," once remarked Miss Penelope Scidmore, principal of the Scidmore Select School for Young Ladies, "to learn that *you*, a young person of the most admirable birth and breeding, should for one moment have countenanced such a breach of the proprieties!" Miss Scidmore had made the painful discovery that certain of her "select" young ladies, under the leadership of Miss Terrill, had walked out of the protecting walls of the S. S. S. Y. L. *without a chaperon*; and that, thus alone and unprotected, they had pressed into service a team of horses and an

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empty hay-wagon which they found on a side street, and had actually taken a ride therein through the principal street of the little town, to the consternation (when he saw them) of the old farmer who owned the wagon, and to the still greater consternation (when she heard of it) of Miss Scidmore.

"*Why*," continued that lady in impassioned tones, "have you thus forgotten what is due to yourself and your family?"

"I am sure I don't know, Miss Scidmore," Katherine had replied with honest contrition; "I—I just did it!" By which it will be seen that this young lady of high birth was, on occasion, as much the sport of freakish impulse as Katie O'Flarity, the daughter of the gardener at Brayton manor. All this by way of explanation—though it is in no sense an excuse—for what is to follow.

The day was warm, as has been intimated, and the claims of "The Scarlet Doom" on the interest of the reader wavered after a little. Historical novels, dealing with the sanguinary past from a cold-blooded American standpoint, were decidedly out of place—thought this sapient young person—amid the fresh, breezy wilds of the Adirondacks. She dropped the book, to fix her undivided attention upon the antics of a pair of squirrels which were frisking in primal gladness from bough to bough of the big pine. Her eyes followed them with a certain distinct satis-

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faction in the lawless freedom of these creatures of the wilderness, whose ancestors cast no chilling shadow upon the joyous present.

At this point in the course of her aimless meditations her vagrant fancy was again arrested by the big spool dangling by a scarlet thread from the branch just above her head. As she gazed at this simple object, Miss Terrill completely forgot her position in society and the august character of her lineage. After full five minutes of reflection, which—as subsequent events proved—might have been spent to better advantage, the descendant of the Brayton Carters deliberately stood up on her chair and detached the big spool from its position.

“This is a cobweb party,” she said solemnly; “the scientific old professor and his box of bugs is the prize.” With that, this “model of all the proprieties” began to walk away into the woods, winding up the scarlet cord as she went.

From fragrant, low-dropping balsam to white-limbed birch; from sunny knoll, crowded with purple-fruited huckleberries, to solemn stretches of forest, where the winds loitered in the odorous branches of the pines, whispering strange, ancient secrets of earth and sky; through trackless wastes of sweet fern, where the gnats bit fiercely; through dense blackberry thickets, which clutched her savagely in their thorny arms; over fallen logs, half rotted away and carpeted deep with softest emerald mosses; past swampy spots,

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where the trim boots sank ankle deep in the black mud—deeper and deeper into the pathless wilderness led the slender clew.

“It’s simply barrels of fun!” sighed the bold adventurer, lapsing into the camp vernacular, as she sank breathless on to a bank to rest, “but—I believe I’ll go back without my prize. It must be nearly dinner-time.”

She reached out after a sprig of wintergreen, where gay scarlet berries glimmered like live coals amid the overarching ferns, her brown cheeks dimpling as she reflected upon the undoubted consternation of the water-lily hunters. Then she sprang to her feet with an air of decision. I must go back at once; we ought not to have stopped at all.”

She glanced down at the bulky form of the big brown spool, and the full extent of her folly dawned suddenly upon her. “How can I go back? I’ve *wound up the cord!*”

It was characteristic of this young person that, preliminarily to a careful consideration of the question, she sank down and laughed—till she cried; this to the great astonishment and dismay of divers small woodfolk, who paused in the business of the hour to observe the new and peculiar animal which produced such strange noises.

“I have come a mile,” she reflected, sitting up and wiping her eyes; “for this spool is full, and number two hangs in the bushes yonder.”

The idea of surprising an elderly student of

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science at his labors had been gradually growing less and less attractive; and now after a period of serious reflection it ceased to appear either funny or fascinating in the slightest degree.

"He is undoubtedly a person who would be politely, sarcastically, and crushingly disagreeable because I had ventured to meddle with his absurd spools," decided Miss Terrill soberly. "I am very glad that I stopped in time; I shall have no trouble in reaching the camp from this point. Of course I shall put the spool exactly where I found it."

She rose slowly to her feet and looked meditatively about her. "I came by that big tree; I remember the dead branch hanging down to the ground."

Ah, foolish maid! keener eyes than those pretty brown ones of yours have been deceived by the wonderful likeness of everything to every other thing in the big woods. The tree with the dead branch certainly led to a perfectly familiar-looking bush; and the bush beguiled the weary little feet to an odorous group of balsams, where bright-eyed squirrels chattered angrily at the wearer of the jaunty red tam. And beyond the balsams there was a cup-like hollow where the beautiful deadly "Fly Amanita" thrust its golden globes through the black-leaf mould. Then the brambles clutched at her with their thorny fingers, and the treacherous mud tried to hold her away from the ripe huckleberries. And all

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the while the gnats and mosquitoes followed hard after—like the hosts of an avenging fate.

But, yes; it was all perfectly plain and not at all far. She would soon catch a sparkle of blue water through the trees, and then dinner and a long, delicious rest in the hammock! The gruesome tales of wayfarers lost and starving in the woods were—she decided—simply figments of weak and elderly imaginations; mere bugaboos to keep children within bounds. Any person of sound judgment and educated powers of observation could easily—

“Gracious!” Miss Terrill rarely made use of such vulgar exclamations, but the exigency of the occasion wrung it from her lips. The spool was again empty! She looked wildly about her; there was no welcome glimmer of blue water, no pervasive odor of a smoky camp-fire, no dinner, no hammock anywhere in sight.

“Well, there is only one thing to do,” decided the girl after a second period of reflection, during which the humorous nature of the adventure did not once recur to her mind. “I will go back to the second spool once more, and try again. One can always do what one must do,” she added sententiously, and with the air of one who combats an unpleasant suggestion.

Two hours later, as she wearily retraced her steps for the third time to the spot where the second spool hung in the bushes, the situation had resolved itself in her mind (she had been a

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“special” in mathematics) into the following concise form:

“Let A represent the camp, and B the position of the second spool, one mile distant from A. How many miles might a person travel in endeavoring to reach A, supposing he started from B in a different direction each time?”

“If the traveler started out from B and traveled in a perfectly straight line each time,” she murmured—a diagram of the problem presenting itself with appalling distinctness before her mental vision—“he might easily travel several hundred miles without reaching A. If he traveled in curved lines—as he certainly would—why—”

The undeniable conclusions were too harrowing to contemplate with calmness, therefore Miss Catherine Carter Terrill sat down upon a mossy log and shed tears for full five minutes. She beheld herself, as it were, the wandering radius of an unknown circle, returning innumerable times to point B, and at last lying cold and unconscious on the forest leaves, the fatal spool clutched tight in her stiffened fingers.

“I shall never find it—never!” she wailed, grinding the innocent cause of her misadventure beneath her boot-heels. “But, oh, how can I let that man find me, as he certainly will, if I hold on to this wretched spool! I *can’t*, if I have to die of slow starvation—and I am so hungry! But suppose I leave the spool here, the unsuspecting

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old gentleman will wind up to it, and then he will have nothing to go by—not even point B!”

A vision of her own revered grandparent wandering gaunt and famished through interminable wastes of desolate forest filled her with a lively anguish.

“No, I must not leave him to perish—it would be murder!” she said with a shudder. “I will find him and tell him what I have done.”

II

John Gearing glanced hastily over the closely written ages of his note-book by the waning light, snapped the cover of his tin specimen case with a well-satisfied air, and rose to his feet.

“It must be getting along toward sunset,” he reflected, with a cursory glance at his watch. “Capital day’s work, though; I shouldn’t like to have missed that scarlet-headed arachnid. As for the coleopteron, I doubt if it has been generally recognized as a genuine crotlyd—which it unquestionably is.”

He paused to drop a full spool into his pocket and disengage an empty one from the limb of a mighty spruce which stood among its fellows weeping odorous tears of purest gum. The bug-hunter eyed it thoughtfully, a cheerful vision of the camp frying-pan, replete with sizzling slices of fragrant bacon, to be succeeded by a long pro-

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cession of substantial slapjacks, rising alluringly before him.

"Jove!" he muttered, "I forgot to eat my lunch!"

The reflections of the hungry scientist as he strode rapidly onward winding up his second spool were both comfortable and complacent. "A more useful device to save valuable time than this simple system of spools was never devised," he decided. "At this moment I am—approximately—one and one-half miles from supper; with no doubtful trail to follow, no delays to puzzle over direction, no uncertainty whatever as to the exact point at which I shall—" He stopped short; his keen ear had caught the sound of crackling branches.

"A deer!" he muttered; "and coming right this way!"

Arachnida, coleoptera, spools, and even supper were forgotten on the instant; and the bug-hunger, alert and silent, stood grasping his rifle, his eyes fixed on the low-growing tangle of evergreens from which the suspicious sounds had proceeded. A moment later and he was staring with undisguised amazement at the small figure which limped rapidly toward him.

"You are *not* Professor Gearing—I am so glad!" were the astonishing words with which the apparition introduced itself. It pushed back a scarlet tam-o'-shanter from a tangle of brown curls, and continued: "I don't know who you

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are, but I am Katherine Terrill and I am lost in these dreadful woods. Do take me home!" With that the figure sank back against a tree with a sound suspiciously like a sob.

"I—I do not understand," stammered the astounded bug-hunter lamely. "I can take you home, certainly; but I must acknowledge that I am John Gearing."

The wearer of the scarlet tam started up with a hysterical laugh. "Professor Gearing is an old man!" she cried, "and *you*—you are quite—quite young! I took his spool out of the camp, and I can't find the way back!"

"The spool—eh! You don't mean—"

"Yes, I do. I took it and wound it up to point B—I mean the second spool," faltered the mischief-maker, her cheeks dyed with penitent blushes. "I—I was stopping at the camp, you see, for a few moments with a friend, and I saw the spool. I can't tell you why I did it." This last with a vain clutch after her vanished dignity. "It—it just occurred to me that it might be—"

"I hung that empty spool there merely as a tag at the end of my string," remarked John Gearing meditatively. "I certainly—"

"Say anything you like to me," interrupted Miss Terrill solemnly; "I deserve it. We shall never get home alive—never!"

John Gearing stared at the speaker for a full minute, then he threw back his head and laughed

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long and loud. "I—I beg your pardon, Miss Terrill," he said at length; "but really—"

"Oh, yes, you may laugh!" said the young lady with an indignant shrug. "I laughed too—at first. But it hasn't seemed a bit funny for at least six hours. I tell you we *can't* get back! We shall starve to death; and it's—it's getting dark!"

The bug-hunter was sobered in an instant by the pitiful quiver in the tired voice.

"You don't mean to say that you have been wandering about since morning with nothing to eat?" he asked anxiously.

"Nothing but huckleberries—and I loathe huckleberries!"

John Gearing hastily swung his pack-basket to the ground. "These sandwiches"—producing a parcel of dubious aspect—"have suffered somewhat, I fear, knocking about all day among my traps; but if you will accept them—"

"They look perfectly delicious!" declared the young lady with unconcealed delight. "But I shall eat only one—it is just possible, you know, that we might—in time—"

"I beg that you will give yourself no further anxiety on that score!" cried John Gearing confidently. "We are only a trifle over a mile from camp; we'll be there inside of an hour."

The girl shook her head mournfully. "That we are so near is just the most dreadful part of it," she said, winking rapidly to keep back two

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big tears which were trying hard to pass the barrier of her long lashes. "But if you really think you can find the way, do let us start at once. Of course we can reach the second spool," she added. "I—I was frightened when I saw how late it was growing, so I came to meet you. I thought it was my duty to—to tell you—"

John Gearing surveyed the speaker in puzzled silence. "Do you—er—mind telling me," he burst out after a long pause, during which the stealthy twilight made perceptible advances, "what—that is—why you were so sure that I was somebody else—at first, you know?"

"What *must* you think of me!" exclaimed Miss Terrill irrelevantly, stopping short in the midst of a vicious tangle of blackberry bushes for no other purpose, it appeared, than to wring her small hands. "It has all been so dreadful that I haven't realized *that*! You must think me bold and meddlesome and—and generally horrid!"

"I have thought nothing of the kind!" retorted the bug-hunter with unnecessary warmth: "It was all the fault of those infernal spools! I wouldn't mind this"—with a comprehensive wave of the hand which seemed to include all the hostile forces of nature—"if it were not for you. I should get into camp all right, some time; but—"

"You may think so, but you couldn't," said the girl with a pitying glance at the stalwart figure. "It will be all the harder for you to bear; and when I think that I did it—that it is all my

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fault! But of course I didn't think—I could never have imagined—what a fatal thing I was doing when I touched that spool. No, wait till I have told you all.” With that she poured forth the tale of the day's adventures, closing with a statement of the problem which she had spent six unhappy hours in trying to solve.

“Don't you see,” she said in a shaking voice, “how utterly improbable it is we shall *ever* reach point A?”

John Gearing had smiled more than once during this recital; he also frowned as he stared anxiously into the black depths of the forest which shut them in like a wall.

“Miss Terrill,” he said gravely, “your conclusions are undeniably logical and unpleasantly correct—from your premises; but luckily there are other factors which you have overlooked, and which must be introduced. One is, that the guides are sure to beat the woods for miles about point A. There is, therefore, not the slightest danger of our becoming either variable or permanent radii of point B. The only question to be considered at present it, shall we make any immediate attempt to solve the problem ourselves? You are already weary, and—”

“You might attach a second spool at point B,” interrupted the girl, knitting her pretty brows; “our chances would then be multiplied by two.”

“But I object to the preliminary division,” said John Gearing decidedly; “it simply isn't to

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be thought of. The darkness has closed in upon us at an unconscionably early hour," he went on rapidly. "I can not understand it, unless, to add to our perplexity, it is about to—" A drop of water which landed squarely on the tip of his nose explained the phenomenon.

"It is raining," observed Miss Terrill with the calmness of despair. "But of course that was to be expected. We will go on," she added firmly. "No—I am not at all tired, and I am quite accustomed to the woods." This last with a superb gesture of refusal as her victim offered his arm.

Two minutes later her foot slipped on a treacherous log, and with a cry she plunged forward into the darkness.

John Gearing was at her side in an instant. "My poor little girl," he murmured, lifting her with all possible gentleness, "are you much hurt?"

"At all events I have not sprained my ankle," said the girl with a faint laugh. "But I slipped once before to-day, and—"

John Gearing groaned. "I shall never forgive myself for my outrageous folly!" he declared savagely, and quite involuntarily he tightened the clasp of his strong arms.

Miss Terrill laughed again in spite of herself. "Put me down, please, Mr. Gearing," she said. If you should change most of the pronouns in your last statement to the second person, it would be quite what I deserve. I fear I shall

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have to stop where I am but you must go on. Please go at once before it gets any darker."

"And leave you here alone?"

"Yes."

By way of answer, John Gearing hastily divested himself of his thick shooting-jacket and wrapped it about his companion with an authoritative firmness which admitted of no question.

"I have four matches—and a half, to be exact," he said, after a careful search through his various pockets. "Luckily it hasn't rained long enough to wet the ground; if the fates aren't too unkind we'll have a camp-fire inside of five minutes."

A flash, a sizzle, an impatient exclamation announced that match number one had weakly succumbed to the untoward influences of the place and hour. Two, three, and four followed with disheartening unanimity, during intervals plainly occupied in a frantic search for drier material.

"If you only had some paper," ventured a timid voice out of the darkness.

"Of course! Thank heaven you reminded me before I struck that last half-match!"

Another moment, and a score of closely written pages treating learnedly of the coleoptera and arachnida of the great northern wilderness were blazing merrily in the midst of a skilfully constructed pile of twigs and branches.

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"Wasn't it fortunate you happened to have that paper?" observed Miss Terrill, as she leaned forward to warm her chilled fingers at the now thoroughly established fire.

"Fortunate!" echoed John Gearing, dropping his specimen-box as he stooped to lay another stick on the fire—whereat the scarlet-headed arachnid and the coleoptera, one and all, wriggled out and away with joyful haste. "It was by all odds the most fortunate thing I know of."

"Perhaps you will think me a coward," began the girl, after a prolonged pause which the rain-drops filled with a soft, insistent murmur. "Do you think it would be very wrong for me—that is, for you—" She turned her head away from the searching firelight as she continued in so low a voice that John Gearing was forced to bend his tall head to listen—"if they find us? You said they would search for us?"

"They will search for us—certainly, and find us."

"If they know—that is, if you—if—I must tell them that I took the spool to—to find you, I could not face them—I could not bear it!"

"Ah, but the fact is that I found you!" said John Gearing in his deepest voice.

"Yes—but—the spools!"

The bug-hunter leaned forward and deliberately dropped a full half dozen of them into the red heart of the fire.

"There are no spools," he said calmly.

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A more unpleasant spot than the virgin forest of the Adirondacks on a wet night it would be difficult to find. Mr. Percy Algernon Smith put this fact more forcibly; he said— But why repeat the words of a man who has forced his way through some six or eight miles of soaking coves, pursued all the way by jubilant throngs of mosquitoes—his energies being still further taxed by laborious and systematic performance on a big tin horn?

“I say, Jake,” he bawled, pausing after a succession of ear-splitting blasts, “d’ye hear anything?”

The guide nodded. “To the west on us,” he said, jerking his thumb over his shoulder. “ ’Tain’t fur, neither.”

The sagacious reader has already divined that this is only the beginning of the story. Its ending was after the old, old fashion, of which wise people the world over never grow tired, and which in truth is the end—or the beginning—of every story that is at all worth the telling. In this place it must be set down in just four words—afterward they were married.

It was my good fortune, not many months later, to hear Mrs. John Gearing relate the above romantic circumstances, which she did with the prettiest smiles and blushes imaginable.

In closing she declared solemnly that never in all the course of her existence had such a welcome, glad, cheerful, happy, enlivening, and al-

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together delightful vision greeted her eyes as the round, freckled face of "Cinnamon" Smith as he burst through the dripping branches on that rainy August night.

But she never so much as mentioned the spools; it was their ashes that told the tale.

THE LOTUS EATERS

BY VIRGINIA TRACY

THE LOTUS EATERS

BY VIRGINIA TRACY

“**A**ND leaves me to starve,” said Estella, cutting off a leg of the chicken and throwing it to the nearest dog. “Leaves me to starve in the gutter, and leaves Regina, his own flesh and blood—look at that child, Kate, look at her! What sort of a brute could desert a child like that? Was her mother’s comfort, yes, she was!—leaves Regina without a rag to her back.” She absent-mindedly put a piece of chicken into her mouth, and leaned her elbows on the table.

“I really don’t know what we shall do about the rent,” said Mrs. Donnelly. “When he came for it this morning he told Barbara he’d be back this afternoon, and it’s a hot day for anybody to be out, let alone a fat fellow like him. You can’t put off the landlord himself like you can an agent, anyway. I could pay ten dollars on account next Saturday night. If he won’t take that, or your alimony doesn’t come, I don’t know what’ll become of us.”

“I’m sure I don’t know either,” said Estella. “It seems such a nuisance to move. Speak for it,

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then?"—"Woof! Woof!" said Dooley, the fatter of the Scotch terriers.—"I thought we were going to be so happy here, too, when we first came. He seemed such a nice, unassuming sort of man."

Tony, who was washing the household linen in the kitchen, put his head through the doorway. It was a lordly little black head, and belonged to a young fellow of a slender middle height, motions extraordinarily light and free, and blue, humorous, inquisitive, confidential eyes. Said he: "I beg your pardon, Estella, but the big dishpan—has it gone to heaven?"

"It's out on the fire-escape," replied Estella, "with gasoline in it. I put all the old gloves I could find into gasoline this morning, so that if any of us should happen to get an engagement, they'd have clean gloves, anyway."

Tony withdrew. He had not looked at Estella, but at Barbara, the Beauty, who sat in the window-sill, and who continued to look neither at him nor at Estella, nor at the riot of the dogs and the chicken-bones and Regina upon the uncarpeted floor, but across the shining roof-tops to the Palisades.

The mistress of this Harlem flat was Mrs. Estella Baker. Mr. Baker was divorced. He was a prosperous person, and paid a considerable alimony, with which he was not always sufficiently prompt. With Mrs. Baker lived her infant daughter, Regina Rosalys, and her younger sis-

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ter, Barbara Floyd. Also she had as summer boarders Mr. Anthony Regnault, a young actor who seldom happened to be out of work, Mr. Fred Donnelly, not much older, who seldom happened to be in it, and Mrs. Kate Donnelly, an elderly typewriter, who had married a brother Donnelly, deceased. All the boarders paid far more than their board, when they had it, and nothing at all when they had not. At the present moment, they had been some time through lunch without having as yet cleared away its remains, and Estella and Mrs. Donnelly, whose employer was away on his own vacation, had been regaling the company with accounts of the Russian coronation, which they read from the newspapers that strewed the room. Fred Donnelly, who was busy pinning the edge of his tie over a spot he had just discovered on his shirt-front, gloomily commented upon Estella's last remark: "I guess it'll be a long enough day before any of us get an engagement!"

"You forget Tony!" said his sister-in-law.

"I ain't ever let to," Fred responded with some savagery. "I—can't you stop gorging on those papers a minute? They're two months old!"

"That makes 'em all the lovelier," replied Estella. "Tony threw them off the kitchen shelf this morning, and I felt so good to read it all over again. You feel sure, then, that it's all true."

"Tony's generous with his old newspapers. That's because he's signed for a job. But he

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don't begin till November. November—Lord! you can't believe there's ever going to be such a month."

"Oh, we may all be working by then," cried Estella, in her voice of tragic fire. "You can't tell. You don't suppose we're going to go on like this, do you?"

"Not if we don't pay the rent, we ain't," said Fred. "We'll have fifteen dollars the week after next, Barbara and me, if we pose for those kinetoscope things. But we owe all that now, in little bills."

"That reminds me, Tony," Estella called, "I wish you could get both the tablecloths ironed by to-night," 'cause you can't do it to-morrow. No; they're going to shut the gas off to-night; we had a notice from 'em yesterday."

"Well, this fellow was just right," declared Mrs. Donnelly, glaring up from her newspaper; "this one that refused to kiss the Czarina's hand. It's a nasty, silly thing to do. They'll never catch me doing it."

"Nor me, I'm afraid," said Tony, reappearing with a bucket that brimmed wet tablecloths. He paused for a moment in the doorway, and leaned there, exceedingly comfortable and cool. Indeed, on this mid-summer afternoon, when the unshaded dining-room appeared altogether huddled and tousled and hot, there was in the look of this very competent amateur laundryman something so tranquil, so airy and sylvan, that it

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might have suggested a beneficent gentleman-dryad but for the absurd great pipe which was hanging out of his mouth. "I'll take these up to the roof now, Estella; I've just hung out the smaller pieces. We can't tell but that later Barbara'll help me take them down. But I do hope, Estella, that the next flat we appropriate will have a coal range. If we are to have no fire to iron with to-morrow, how shall we cook?"

"I suppose we'll have to go out to our meals. I've got my wedding-ring yet. He can force me to part with that, Tommy Baker can, but he can't force me to let our child starve."

That must be very disenchanting for Tommy." Tony answered. "But I think I'll leap out with a chair or two before it comes to our eating up your wedding-ring, Estella."

Regina Rosalys, who was at that moment recuperating from her wrestling matches with the dogs, said suddenly: "Anny Bobs gah go ring."

"No, no, darling. Poor Auntie Barbara hasn't got any ring at all. You lost Auntie Barbara's little blue ring down the stationary washstand, don't you remember?"

"No, no, Anny Bobs gah go ring, big go ring"; Regina's fat little hands formed an oblong about the size of cucumber. "Big," she persisted, nodding.

"She means that Indian bracelet," said Estella. Tony looked anxiously and a little fearfully at Barbara, and forgot to joke. At that

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moment the doorbell rang. Tony leaned back into the kitchen and pressed the little electric button which opened the street door.

"Oh!" cried Estella, "that's the expressman with my money now." She rose and ran into the hall.

There was a waiting silence. Tony continued to lean in the doorway and look at the girl in the window-seat. She had gray eyes of a miraculous, deep clearness, but she kept these turned away in a far-off quiet, profound enough to strike cold upon a suitor's heart. Tony had to content himself with the faint bright color in the oval of her cheek; the pale rose of her faded and shrunken cotton blouse stopped in a little drawn circle at her throat; the throat itself was very white and regal-looking under the piled fairness of Barbara's brown hair. One hand dropped, motionless, against her old gray skirt, and Tony smiled to it wistfully. It was a modest smile, under a trick of audacity. Tony was three-and-twenty, and all women had done their best to spoil him, except Barbara, who had remained silent the summer through before his love. By the community before which so much of it had, perforce, to be carried on, the love-making was encouragingly ignored, but the community was beginning to get restless, because from the lady it received no confidence. The summer was sunning itself away, and still Barbara rested, whether or not to be wooed, passive, idle, enigmatic, lovely; and

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still prayerfully, and with deft derision, Tony continued publicly to woo her. Now, though he could not catch her glance, his eyes spoke declarations twenty times a minute, and formally proposed to her. They besought, commanded, laughed at her, adored her. Suddenly, when there seemed least hope, she turned round and looked at him. It was a very steadfast, searching look, and Tony tingled and rejoiced to meet it. He lifted his head happily, with a singular pride, and at the little motion the girl put her hand sharply to her throat and turned away.

"He's a long time coming upstairs," said Fred.

At that moment Estella ran back into the hall of the flat and closed the door with the effect of a subdued cyclone.

"It's not the expressman!" she called, in a shrieking whisper. "The top of his head looks like the milkman, and his bill's due." Tony laughed aloud.

"Tell him to come again," suggested Kate Donnelly, still fortified by immersion in the coronation glories.

"Told him that last time," said Fred.

"Oh, well, maybe he wasn't coming here," said Estella, listening a moment, and continued, "maybe it was only the janitor, after all. Once before the alimony didn't come, and then it turned out the expressman had brought it two or three times, only the downstairs bell didn't ring, so to-day I asked the janitor to ring the

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bell every time he went past, so I'd feel quite easy."

The upstairs bell unkindly rang.

"Ssh!" hissed Estella; "pretend we're out."

"Is he to suppose the downstairs door was opened by a spook?" Tony whispered.

"Well, you needn't talk. You did it." She came back into the dining-room, and sat down with infinite non-rustling precautions. "I'm sure I'd like to pay him as well as anybody. Indeed, nobody has the horror of debt I've got. I tremble with it when I wake in the night. It's born in me. I don't know why, but I can't pay what I haven't got, not if I was to coin my blood for it." The bell rang again. "Well, he can just tire himself out at that," Estella added. "I should think he'd know we'd have opened it before if we'd wanted him."

Tony's eyes overran with laughter. Regina threw herself into Barbara's lap, and Barbara put her face into the black mop of Regina's curls, and began to whisper a story to her.

"I wish I was out of the whole business," muttered Fred: "out of the profession, I mean. I wish I knew another durned thing to do. I had a chance to be a dentist once, but I was too good for it then. When that old aunt of mine in Ireland dies, I bet I take my share of what she leaves and buy an interest in a business. And when you're all down on your luck, you can come to me, people, and I'll help you out."

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"My share in that pneumatic tire'll be worth thousands of dollars by then," said Mrs. Donnelly, refolding her newspaper. "They've got a backer for it now who's going to put it right on the market. Will Knowles says there's a fortune in it, and he's an inventor."

"I was thinking the other day it would be nice to invent something," replied Estella; "but I never get mine finished, somehow."

The enemy without gave a final knock and ring, and departed. He was pursued downstairs by the barks of the terriers and the shrieks of Regina, who at that moment rushed, all three, into each other's arms.

"Look here," said Fred; "are you sure it wasn't Mr. Bates come for the rent? He told Barbara he'd be here at three o'clock."

"Mercy! Look out of the window, Barbara, and see who it was." Barbara leaned out and down, watching.

"Well, I vow!" said Mrs. Donnelly. "Do you know what those Gostioffs, or whatever their name is, have been doing? The Czar said everybody could make their crowns out of silver-gilt, because some of 'em are as poor as church mice, and those Gostioffs have been over to Paris and had theirs made out of solid gold!"

"Who told you?"

"It's in the paper. And he's just come of age, a while ago, and paid all his debts."

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"Seems rather an excessive person," Tony commented.

Mrs. Donnelly made a little clucking noise to her newspaper: "Tsu! Tsu!—well, poor boy, he does all he can."

"Who?" demanded Fred.

"The Emperor of all the Russias," answered Tony, laughing from under his eyelashes at Kate. "Kate's very partial to him. I sometimes feel quite piqued."

"Well, I don't care. He's a very good man; he wants—"

"They say," remarked Estella dreamily, "that she's got a gold typewriter set with diamonds."

"It was the milkman," announced Barbara, drawing in her head.

Estella had picked up an illustrated weekly, and she now passed it with a tender smile to Mrs. Donnelly. "Wouldn't Barbara look sweet fixed just the way the Czarina is? Those pearl ropes—I'll bet they're yards long—they're just the sort of thing that suits Barbara."

Mrs. Donnelly gravely regarded the Czarina's likeness. "She looks very handsome," she said. "I hope she'll be happy. She's got a kind of a sad look. I knew a girl once, a nice, pretty girl as could be; she looked something like our Barbara, too, only Barbara's the handsomest of the lot—had something that same look at her wedding, and before the very first year was out he had run off to Canada with a pot of money—

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he was a partner in a wholesale bicycle business—and another woman, and she, poor thing, had to take in boarders.”

Estella sat up, clutched her floating yellow dressing-sack about her neck, and with the other hand shoved back the toppling mass of her black hair. “Well!” she cried, “I’d like to know what you mean by that, Kate Donnelly! I didn’t think I should ever be insulted at my own lunch-table by people talking as if it were a disgrace to take boarders! You ought to honor me for it, or any other honest way of making my living. I’ve got my fatherless child to support, and I’m proud of it, and as God is my witness, I think a woman can be a lady, no matter how little money she has. And if you mean to insinuate anything against Tom Baker, I can tell you that whatever my troubles with my husband may have been—and I think you might have had more consideration for Regina than to mention a woman—there never was a breath against his honesty, and he never quarreled with but one of his employers in his life that would bring men he knew home drunk to sleep in the office, and that diamond bracelet I gave him to get the doctor’s bill on once when he was out of work, he went and got out and gave it back to me as soon as I got my divorce!” There was a glass pitcher full of lemonade on the table. Estella helped herself to a long drink, and added: “And even so, I shouldn’t call you exactly boarders, anyway.”

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Mrs. Donnelly arose in trembling majesty and took her hat off the mantelpiece. "I'll send you my address, Estella Baker," she said, "as soon as I get one. And you can send your bill in when you like. I wouldn't speak to a dog as you've spoken to me, and I wouldn't take it from you if you were the Queen of England. And as for calling us boarders, I should think you wouldn't, with Tony working like a black slave, and Fred putting off the butcher, and me paying regular every Saturday. I wouldn't have stayed here to have my ears deafened the way you screech, Estella Baker, for anybody but Tony, that was the sweetest child I ever saw when I used to go on as extra in the Amazon marches at his father's theatre, before that sneaking hound of a Gillespie got it away from him—though I've worked hard here to help you, and glad to do it, as you well know. I hope, when I'm gone—"

"Before you go, Kate, dear," said Tony, putting his pipe on the mantelpiece, "we'd better clear the table, or I fear Barbara will be forced to work."

Barbara rose hurriedly, but like a creature moving in a sleep, and Mrs. Donnelly snatched up a plate with one hand, and with the other pushed the young girl back into the window-seat. "Stay where you are," said she, and strode majestically into the kitchen. Her brother-in-law, who had not bestowed so much as a glance upon the previous debate, now lifted a news-

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paper in his turn. "There's a cut of the Felix house," he said. "Down below, you know, on Riverside Drive, the white stone place. Good print, isn't it? I wish I'd gone in for photography when I had that chance three years ago."

"I never thought I'd much care about having that house," said Estella. "The windows come so low down, I'd always be afraid Regina would fall out. Still, of course, you could put wires across them."

"Forgot the tablecloths," cried Tony, running in and snatching up the bucket. "None of you thought of them, of course—loafers! If I have a sunstroke on the roof, say I died true." Tony peered into the pitcher of lemonade as he passed it. "Oof! Little drops of lemon. Nothing more spirited for the laborer, the poor laborer, Mrs. Tommy?" At the hall door—"I will return to you, Barbara," he said to the back of that young lady's head, and vanished.

"Tony gone pok?" asked Regina.

"I wonder," said Estella, "if Tony's written those words for Barbara to sing Sunday night?"

"Anny Bobs ta Rina pok?" Regina persisted.

"No, no," said Estella, "Auntie Barbara can't take Regina to the park now; it's too hot."

"Too hot?"

"Yes; too hot. Make Auntie sick. Poor Auntie."

"Poo Anny; Anny Bobs ta Rina pok?"

"No; now, Regina, you're naughty."

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Regina puffed out an under-lip and nodded: "Rina awn do finey aws," said she plaintively.

"Oh, Regina, why don't you learn to talk plainer. Oo bid dirl, ess oo is, oo bid dirl! You mostly know what she says, Fred."

"She said, 'Regina wants to go on the flying-horses.'"

"Oh, darling, mamma hasn't any money for that.—No, indeed, Barbara, carfare and everything!—You can go on the flying horses when mamma gets an engagement. Here—here's a nickel. You can play with that."

Regina turned the nickel over and over in the creases of her little warm hand, and Fred returned to his former statement—"I guess it'll be a long day before any of us gets an engagement."

"I'll bet you anything you like," cried Estella, "that I'll be starring in my own play before the year's out. That play's bound to succeed, because it speaks right to people's hearts. I wrote every word of it out of my own soul. There isn't a word in it without a throb, and yet the comedy interest's good, too. I think Barbara'll be quite sweet in that. She's a little tall for comedy, but then—. You know Sam Tannehill? He says it's the greatest play that's been written in America since 'The Banker's Daughter.'"

Mrs. Donnelly, who had been going to and from the kitchen with the dishes, now swept away the tablecloth, and Estella, still clutching the lemonade, and waving the butter-knife, leaned

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back to give her free play. She concluded, "He asked me why I didn't let Olga Nethersole have it."

"Well, dearie," said Mrs. Donnelly, "why don't you? I'm sure you deserve a little luck."

"Well," said Estella, "I guess not. Nobody'll ever play that part but me. There's plenty of managers would be glad to take the play, and put their own old stars into it; night and day I'm afraid some one will steal my ideas. If I could only get a good part in New York and show people just once what I could do, there'd be plenty of managers ready to back me in my play afterward!"

Fred yawned. "Estella," said he, "when you do get an engagement you quarrel with the stage-manager and come home."

Estella planted her elbows on the table. "That's because they've got such old fuss-budgets of stage-managers. I guess after I've sat up all night wearing myself to pieces studying my art, I'm not going to be dictated to by those ignorant things. It was mean of that old Dawkins, though, to fight with me, when I'd had my pink crêpe dress made for their old piece, and I hadn't even got it paid for yet. Wasn't that a sweet dress, Kate? I wore my real coral and gold belt with it that Tommy gave me while we were married. He always said he did like me to look nice, Tommy did. I've got plenty of clothes to take an engagement if I could only

get one. I wish the dogs hadn't broken Whopper, and I'd ask her when we any of us were going to get anything."

"We always ask her that, and she always lies. We'd better ask her when the alimony's coming."

Estella looked at the pieces of the broken planchette which were scattered over the floor. "They looked so cunning breaking it up, and Tony would name her that," she added, with apparent irrelevance. "Hand me the cards, Fred, and let me see if I can see anything."

As she shuffled the pack her mind went back to the pink crêpe.

"If she likes to fix it over I'll let Barbara wear that dress to Mrs. Wade's Sunday night, and I can take her blue waist; you know, Kate, that one you made out of the old pair of sleeves."

She looked cordially at Barbara, but the girl did not answer, nor turn her head.

"She's dreaming," said Fred. "Love's young dream, Barbara? Estella, do you see a dark man?"

"Let her be," pleaded Mrs. Donnelly; "maybe she is really thinking about Tony."

"You make me tired, Kate," said the fraternal Fred; "you bet Tony can do his own love-making. You bet he can look after himself. I wonder," he added in a half-voice, "if she says things to him, though, when they're alone. He keeps on so."

"You never can tell," Estella sighed.

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"She might be very glad to have the chance of him!" Mrs. Donnelly almost cried aloud.

"I guess my sister doesn't need to be glad of anybody, Kate Donnelly, and he's very unsettled and extravagant; I've always heard so."

"Oh, rot!" said Fred, getting in ahead of his sister-in-law. "What of it? He's only a boy, and most of the year he's more money than he knows what to do with. I don't know why it should be worse for him to throw gold dollars around than for anybody else to do it."

"Slander loves a shining mark," said Mrs. Donnelly, sententiously.

Fred laughed. "Well there's nothing so very shining about Tony, except a first-class job in the future. But, of course, he's lucky to have that, at his age; and I daresay it is his luck and his good looks and those kid ways of his starts those notions. He's really a corking fellow. Tony is, and straight, as far as I know. But if he buys a girl a pair of gloves—and I don't say he doesn't like a pretty girl—there's as much cackle as if another man had bought her Fifth Avenue. And he's too easy-tempered; he lets stories get around about him, things that matter. Look at that old gander last week at Reilly's—said it was Mrs. Rexal who got him that part with Rexal, and—you know what people say."

"Oh!" said Barbara, "it's all cowardly. It's a lie." ("Why, she's awake after all," laughed

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Fred.) She turned in upon them from the window, and her live voice broke into the room with its curious little throaty richness. "I—I don't deceive myself about Tony. I daresay he's wild, I daresay he's unreliable, but we must all know that he was never—base." Her face flushed and paled, her hands clinched in her lap. "We're unsteady and extravagant ourselves, Estella, and what should we have done this summer: who would have given us any pleasure, who would have helped us, who would have worked for us, what should we have done here without Tony? I remember all the time, even if we're only a caprice of his, even if he doesn't mean a word he says, we are his debtors a thousand, thousand times."

The hall door opened, and they heard Tony banging the bucket and whistling "My girl's a high-born lady," as he went into his own room.

"My dear! my dear!" Estella warned her.

"That's right, Barbara," said Fred. "I tell you the truth, I didn't think you had so much sense. There's nothing the matter with Tony except a first-class appetite for being happy. Look at him all this summer—till his next season's manager puts a stop to it—goes and makes a darned jockey of himself, for ten dollars a week, riding their plug steeplechasers in a backwoods melodrama. Does anybody say a word for him about that? Why, no! You'd think they all did it! But he went to dinner at the

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Waldorf last night with a fellow I know that had made some money at Brighton, and a couple of girls, and I'll bet you everybody on Broadway's talking about it."

"At the Waldorf? Is that where he was?" cried Barbara. "Last night!" She leaned forward and stared at Fred intently. Something in her accent recalled to the assemblage their own last night's dinner; the little hot untidy dining-room, and the scramble in getting the dishes washed up, and the fact that the ice had given out. Only Estella remembered for the first time that Barbara had dressed her hair elaborately yesterday afternoon, and had tried to press out her white lace waist, and had scorched it. She remembered in the same flash that the morning before Tony had praised the stately habit of dressing for dinner. She pushed away the cards, and in her turn looked at Barbara, as Barbara was looking at Fred.

"Was *that* where he was?" said the girl again.

"I'm sure he had every right to be!" cried Kate.

"I'm sure we should be the last to question that right," Barbara said.

"'Feathered like a peacock, just as gay,'" sang Tony's whistle, clipped suddenly by the sound of splashing water.

"That boy's got his head under the faucet again!" exclaimed Mrs. Donnelly. "He'll give himself neuralgia."

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"Why, Barbara!" Estella cried; "yesterday was—"

"Oh, yes," she moved her hands helplessly in her lap; "I was twenty yesterday."

"Oh, dearie! I'm so sorry! I never thought of it."

"Tony never knew of it," said Kate.

"Why, no," Barbara replied; "why should he?"

"Here he comes now," said Fred.

He came in as radiant with idleness as he had lately been with work, and very fresh from his encounter with the faucet, whose drops were still shining, bright and cold, in his black hair. There was what Estella called a diván at one side of the room; Tony composed himself upon its cushions with a fan and a glass of lemonade, and lounged there, staring at the ceiling like a contented child. He found a considerable diversion in teaching himself to drink without changing his attitude, and while he was acquiring this art, the talk tried to jerk itself past his interruption. Everybody had been a little startled by Barbara's outbreak, everybody felt that Fred would better have kept his knowledge to himself, and a little uneasy bewilderment, as at a treachery to Tony, shadowed more lively interests and quieted the long talk. They looked rather gravely at the profile view which was once more accorded them of Barbara's head.

"What's the matter, Estella?" asked Tony,

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glancing at the newspapers. "Aren't there any murders?" At the continued silence he lifted his head. "Hello! What's the scandal?"

"You are!" said Estella. "The idea of you being around here, anyhow, and me with a sister that's just twenty!"

"There has to be somebody to watch Fred," said Tony.

"It's Fred's been giving you away. Oh, he didn't mean to! But he says you throw your money around."

"He wants to show you what a beautiful nature I have," said the accused. He looked lovingly at Fred, because he had black murder in his heart. He looked with anxious stealth at Barbara, but Barbara seemed not to notice.

"He says people say things about you," Estella continued.

"Slander loves a shining mark," repeated Mrs. Donnelly, with solemn emphasis.

"Nice Kate!" said Tony. He went and sat down on the floor by her chair, and stroked her hand. "Good Kate! Pretty Kate!"

"I'm sure," continued Mrs. Donnelly, pretending to push him off, "nobody could be a better boy around the house than he is. Could they, now, could they? I bet you'd all want him back fast enough if he went away! I've known him since he was no bigger than that," measuring about the height of a footstool, "and never saw a cross word come out of his mouth, and I

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can tell you, if this never having a cent is hard on us, he's had more money to throw away when he was a child on a rocking-horse than would pay this miserable old rent time and again, and not a complaint out of him."

"Good Tony!" said that gentleman. He added in a tone of profound conviction, "Noble Tony."

Estella studied him with her chin in her hand. "Yes," she said, "you're a very sweet boy. But—you're Irish."

"I once had a father, Mrs. Baker, and he was French."

"Well, goodness, that only makes it worse!"

"Oh, dear!" said Tony drowsily, "where French and Irish meet and make a mixture that is not discreet. That's for you, Barbara, who love the poets!" He opened his eyes and stared sadly at his hostess. "It's inelegant to display such a prejudice against the foreign, dear Estella."

"I hope you've written those new verses to Gus Fenwicke's song, since you're so smart; Barbara won't have time to learn them for Sunday night, Tony Regnault, if you've put them off again, and she won't sing the old ones. Mr. Fenwicke's going to be there to hear her Sunday, and he's going to sing himself."

"Dear me, how unnecessary of him," said Tony. He went back to the couch where his banjo lay, and began to touch an air upon it as

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he spoke the lines. Certainly, he looked at Barbara.

"The sleeping princess quiet lay
And dreamed the empty years away,
Her love delayed;
And princes came and princes went,
And mighty kings magnificent
As they above her beauty bent
Were all afraid, afraid.

"And no man knew what word would wake,
Nor for what fortune's golden sake,
Or deed of love,
That shining princess would arise,
Unveil the kindness of her eyes
And stretch the hand that he would prize
All worlds above, above.

"A beggar at the palace gate
Had a light heart to tempt his fate
And entered in;
He wished no other joy but this,
And this for death he would not miss:
He touched her sweet mouth with a kiss—
She waked for him, for him!"

"Oh!" cried Mrs. Donnelly, "isn't that lovely!"

"That last line doesn't rhyme, Tony," said Estella, with severity.

"Will you sing it, Barbara?" Tony asked.

"Thank you," she said. "It is very charming. You were very kind to write it. But I don't think I shall sing it. I don't think I shall sing at all."

Said Tony: "That pink thing you have on is very becoming to you, my own."

"You mustn't call Barbara that, Tony!" cried Estella. "It doesn't sound well. I can't have it."

"Not even when it isn't true?" Tony pleaded.

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"Not even to please Barbara? If you'll move over a little, Barbara, I'll sit by you a minute." He secured to himself a part of the window seat, and remained there, swinging his heels and playing "Daisy" on the banjo. Barbara's slim young stateliness, aided by her trailing skirts, made her look almost as tall as he, and far more resolute. She seemed to him, as he studied her out of the corner of an eye, to be very pale and very tragically sweet.

"I'm glad, Estella," he said, "that you are beginning to awaken to a sense of your responsibilities about us. We shall be almost grown up in a minute. 'These pretty babes went hand in hand'—you remember what happened to *their* wicked guardian, Mrs. Baker, after the robin-redbreasts had covered them with leaves? I am afraid Barbara would be rather long for robin-redbreasts; she would keep them busy."

Estella smiled disdainfully. "You look like a yard of pump-water, the both of you," said she.

"The each of us, Estella. And it's still incorrect to be cross with my physique—Napoleon was once slender. Barbara's, to be sure," lifting Barbara's lovely wrist between his thumb and finger, and critically regarding it—"Barbara's, to be sure, is no great shakes."

She did not smile, she did not even withdraw her hand. Tony laid it carefully in her lap. "Cheer up, Anny Bobs!" he whispered.

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At this moment the entire apartment was filled with the roar of Regina's rage. "Mahmu a my nicky. Mahmu a my nicky."

"What?" said every one; "what is it?"

"Mahmu a my nicky! A my nicky! Bah Mahmu!"

Fred was stooping over Regina. "Mohammed ate my nickel," he translated. Mohammed was the older terrier.

"A my nicky," assented Regina.

"Ate her nickel? Heavens, swallowed it! It'll kill him!" Estella fell on her knees and glared down the throat of Mohammed, who wagged his tail feebly.

"Bah Mahmu!" cried Regina, beating the air and howling lustily. "A my nicky! Mahmu a my nicky!"

"Do you think it'll kill him?" persisted Estella; "was Stella's old boy? Did want doctor?"

"Wa my nicky!" entreated Regina.

"It seems to me extremely forehanded of him," said Tony to Regina. "You know you nearly ate it yourself."

Regina stopped crying and stared at him. She began slowly to smile and dimple, and presently extended a hand. "Nicky," said she.

Tony laid a copper on her palm. "Penny," he said; "not nicky. 'Nough."

Regina went over to Estella and pulled her arm. "Mah-ma, nicky."

Estella closed Mohammed's mouth with her

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fingers and kissed his nose. "Him eat nickels?" she inquired.

"No, I haven't got another nickel for you, Regina, I haven't got— Oh, don't cry. Here, you can have my pearl heart. And here," reaching for a clean napkin and a blue pencil from a crowded trunk-lid at her back, "we'll make a rag dolly, shall we?"

Tony leaped upon her, and wrenched the napkin from her grasp. "I would never wish to interfere with any of your little diversions, Estella," said he, returning in triumph to his seat, "but it is I who wash the linen."

"Oh, Lord, oh, Lord, oh, Lord!" yawned Fred. "What a deadly drag it is! I wonder shall I ever work again?"

"I wonder," said Estella, "why it's always us who can't get parts? We can all act."

"Well, said Fred, "we could if we were let. But the question now is—Mr. Bates told Barbara he'd be here after that blamed rent at three o'clock, and it's about that now; what are we going to tell him?"

"If I could only get a backer for my play," began Estella. "Oh, I wish you'd stop fooling with that banjo, Tony, you put me out so!"

"Say, look here, Tony!" cried Fred, "since you've got a job coming to you—I know it isn't the proper thing, but—couldn't you get something in advance from your management?"

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"Oh!" cried Mrs. Donnelly, "and start out in debt, and be all the season getting even!"

Tony looked hopefully at Barbara, but Barbara positively frowned.

"Unh-unh!" said Tony, shaking his head at Fred; "nev-er bor-row from the man-age-ment. If you do, you'll nev-er save a cent;"—he struck a discreet tinkle from the banjo, and added: "In the mean-time, who will pay the rent?"

"Without turning her head round to the company, Barbara said: "I daresay we shan't have to pay the rent at all, if I marry Mr. Bates."

They were too surprised to speak, but as they gradually recovered their breath, they turned and stared at her; all but Tony, who went on touching the banjo and looking at it carefully. Estella leaned forward and knocked on the table with the handle of the butterknife. "What do you mean by that?" she said.

Barbara put up one hand and smoothed her back hair with deliberate fingers. "When I went into the hall this morning to see if I couldn't inveigle him to go away"—Tony lifted his head quickly and angrily, and frowned from Barbara to Estella—"as I was asked to do," Barbara continued, "he asked me if I would marry him. Or, rather, he asked me to think about it. He is coming back at three to—to help us think about it. He wants to speak to you, Estella."

"Well, I'm not going to have anything to do with it!" Estella cried. "And you needn't frown

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at me, Tony Regnault, for I was taking the curling irons out of the gas-range that very minute, or I would have gone out to him myself. Nobody shall ever say I forced her into it. I wouldn't wreck the life of my own sister, not if he was to pay me for it in diamonds! But God knows, Tony, what's to become of her, the way things are; for even if ever she can make up her mind, and marry you, you're all alike, you actors; I wouldn't trust a girl's heart to the best of you, though it's true Jim Folso did take care of his mother till the day she died—I know that myself—sent her ten dollars a week year out and in; he's had to borrow it from Tommy many a time. No, sir, she'll have to decide it for her own self, Barbara will."

And at this moment, as though by special arrangement with a dramatic deity, there was a ring at the front door.

"It needn't be he, you know," said Estella, confronting a circle of stricken faces.

But it was he. Fred went to the door and ushered in a large, plump, blond gentleman in the elder middle years. He had his coat on his arm and his hat in his hand, and he was mopping his face and forehead with a huge clean handkerchief.

"Good-day, all," said he. "No, don't trouble yourself for me, ma'am," to Estella, who had risen, mute and regal, and was schooling herself to the manner of a dowager empress. He ac-

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cepted a chair, however, and looked around with simple confidence upon the company. "It is hot! When you come to my time of life, you feel the stairs."

"You'll have a glass of lemonade, Mr. Bates," said Tony. He brought a glassful and his own fan to the landlord, and the two men looked at each other as the glass changed hands.

"Thank you," said Mr. Bates, "I don't object."

An embarrassed silence followed these civilities. Tony had cuddled on to the couch again with his inevitable banjo, and the terriers had come forward, and were sniffing at Mr. Bates's legs. Dooley drew back suddenly and showed his teeth; Mohammed instantly broke into a volley of shrill yelps.

"Knows I'm the landlord," tactfully remarked Mr. Bates, setting down his glass, and smiling jovially around. He snapped his fingers at Dooley, "Nice boy, good fellow." The dogs thrust their bodies back and their heads forward, and continued to grumble and to growl. "Well, I guess from what Miss Barbara told me this morning, you didn't want to see me to-day."

"I'll be frank with you, Mr. Bates," said Estella. "My allowance hasn't come yet. God is my witness, I expected it the day before yesterday. Though why I should expect it from a man that forsakes his own child, and that I never would have married if I hadn't been infatuated

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with him—a girl's infatuation, Mr. Bates, you know what that is—I don't know. But I was so sure it would come to-day, while that lace sale was on at Root & Stump's. I thought of dressing to be ready right after lunch—didn't I, Barbara? But it hasn't come. I'm sure you're the last man, Mr. Bates, that would want me to take the bread out of my child's mouth."

"Must be a pretty mean man," said Mr. Bates; "won't spend money to keep his own little girl. But you know, Mrs. Baker, I know people talk, especially the Irish, but owners have to make their property pay, someways."

"Oh, well," said Estella, "after all, this isn't a flat you could really expect much rent for. If I'd had my money this month, there's a lot of things I'd have spoken to you about. We haven't any awnings, for one thing, and it makes the place like a bake-oven, and it makes it look like a tenement; though, for that matter, there isn't a tenement but what has awnings. And that woman in the flat over us, you'll have to speak to her. She says insulting things about my dogs, down the airshaft. Yes, she does; she means to insult me, because I told her she ought to be ashamed to let her parrot use such language. I couldn't let Regina listen to it, Mr. Bates, indeed I couldn't. And the storeroom leaks, or a pipe's burst in it, or something, and I shan't pay my rent at all if my Saratoga trunk is damaged, for there's a lot of wardrobe in it and things no

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money could replace. My white satin—I only wore it two weeks—is in there, and my husband's miniature's in that trunk. I shouldn't like to see that damaged."

"Well, well," said Mr. Bates, heartlessly putting the miniature of Mr. Baker to one side: "I guess you know it isn't altogether about the rent I came. I guess maybe Miss Barbara's told you about what I said to her this morning. No, ma'am; no, gent'men, don't go. I know it's not the usual thing, but you've always seemed sort of like a family here, and I know you'll all talk about it when I'm gone, so might's well have it now. And I'm counting that maybe you'll kind of help me out. I'm not supposing"—he turned a pair of patient eyes on Barbara, and the tame, kindly lovingness in them seemed at once to shield and to caress her—"I'm not supposing Miss Barbara's what's called in love with me. 'Twouldn't be natural, but I think she might like me if she came to know me and gave me a fair show. Especially when she knows more o' the way people get along than she does now; she'd see how different I'd treat her from the way a lot of men do that have got wives and don't know how to use 'em. I always thought this was a kind of rough world for women, and I'd like to do what's really right by one of them."

Nobody answered, but Tony lifted a long grave look to his.

"And so I thought," continued Mr. Bates,

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"that some of you who haven't such fancy ideas as it's natural enough she's got, would speak to her, and tell her that if—if you don't see something as pretty as you'd like, it's best to take something that's all wool."

He was greatly pleased at this flower of speech, and looked up quickly and brightly at Barbara, and Barbara smiled. She had a slow smile of infinite possibilities, and Mr. Bates looked at it a little before he proceeded: "I've got money; a couple of hundred thousand, one way and another, and more making—and I've got health and good habits, and the store I set by her, you wouldn't believe it. Well, I guess she's kind of notiony and high-spirited, and I don't seem much to her, but I'm relying you'll tell her those are things make life comfortable and worth having just the same; and I should think you, Mrs. Baker, that's had your own troubles in your time, would feel kind o' scared to have anything so pretty and so kind of high-headed and proud around like this."

"God is my witness, Mr. Bates—" began Estella, leaning forward.

"Not," hurriedly continued the suitor, "not as I've got anything to say against your profession. Those that like it—why let 'em, I say. But it ain't the life for a woman, is it? Now, is it? Nor, I shouldn't think myself, for a man either. I don't mean any disrespect, but it does seem to me a lady like Miss Barbara's got something

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more coming to her than this, and what's more," he added, meditatively, "it seems like it don't pay."

Tony, who was leaning on his knees, with his chin in his hands, lifted his guileless eyes, and said sweetly: "It's only fair to the profession, Mr. Bates, to tell you that we are not its most victorious exponents."

"Likely, likely," admitted Mr. Bates, a little mystified. "But we can keep a woman out of it, Mr. Reeno, and take her clean away from all this stage business."

"You don't think," inquired Tony—this was the only base advantage Tony took—"you don't think she ought to have anything to say about it herself—the being taken clean away from all this stage business?"

"Not when she's got a man to look after her," said Mr. Bates, "and to give her a comfortable home."

"Oh!" admitted Tony, and confided a twinkle to the flooring.

"Well, my dear," said Estella, "it's a very great responsibility for me, and I don't want to urge you. But if I'd married Mr. Fettercamp when he wanted me to, we'd all be rolling in our own carriages this minute. There was his sister married an Italian prince, and she wasn't a circumstance to Barbara. She's dead now, poor girl, but she married him. But, no, I would have Tommy Baker because I loved him—indeed, I

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did, Barbara Floyd, I loved him madly—but there's no use marrying for love when you can't even be sure he'll send you your alimony right. And because I wrecked my life, Barbara, I'd like to see you marry somebody worthy. I'd say the same if it was Regina. Regina — Regina Baker, don't you put that penny in your mouth. Come here—come here to mama."

Regina advanced slowly, and Estella gathered the curls out of her warm little neck and face, and hastily polished off her face with a handkerchief. "Don't you know Mr. Bates, darling? What do nice little girls say to gentlemen?"

Regina ducked her head, made an unintelligible sound and extended her hand.

"How-de-do, miss," said Mr. Bates, shaking the hand. "I'm sorry I didn't think to bring you some candy. Better luck next time, eh? Why, why, you mustn't begin to cry, little girl. Don't you want to be friends with me?" Regina nodded. "Don't you want to grow up and have a pony to ride and learn the piano?"

"Awn go finey awes," said Regina.

"She wants to go on the flying horses," translated the patient Fred. "Merry-go-round, you know."

"And so she shall!" assented Mr. Bates.

Regina glowed with joy. "An Anny Bobs?"

"And Auntie Barbara?" Mr. Bates repeated after Fred; "why, yes, indeed."

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Regina, in a kind of vacuous triumph, smiled around the room and had an inspiration. "An Tony?"

"Why," responded Mr. Bates hesitatingly, "maybe he wouldn't want to."

A perfect torrent of joyous sounds intended to be affirmative burst from Regina's lips. In the vigor of her confidence she flung herself upon the legs of Mr. Bates and beat his knees. "Oh, yef! As time, as time, aw lone, Rina an Anny Bobs an Tony go finey aws, go roun an roun an roun, an Tony caw go ring!"

There was a suspicion of thickness in the voice of the translator: "Once, last time, nobody else happened to be there. Tony and Barbara rode, too, and Tony caught the gold ring; you know, with those little blunt swords."

"Why, he's a very clever young man," Mr. Bates affably replied.

Regina smote his knees and shrieked with joy. "Oh, yef!" she repeated, "an Anny Bobs gah go ring."

"You said it was Mr. Tony caught the gold ring, little girl."

"That's what she means to say," said Fred.

"No! no!" Regina passionately insisted. "Anny Bobs *gah* go ring! Anny Bobs gah go ring *now*! Rina fine it."

"Well, well, Regina," Estella interrupted, "Mr. Bates can't talk to you all day!"

"I paid it her as a reward of merit. I assure

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you, I gave the man a dime for it," said Tony, softly, with a little blush.

Mr. Bates passed over the insignificance of Tony's shabby boyhood with the good temper of a potentate. "Well," said he, giving his face a final wipe, "I guess I've said what I laid out to. I didn't come here to talk soft. That part of it's just my business, and hers—if she'll have it." He got up and took his hat and went over to Barbara. "Miss Barbara," he said, "if you can make out to like me—like me well enough to have me—you'll never regret it." He held out his hand, and Barbara gave him hers with her long boyish clasp. Kate followed him to the door, and let him out.

An unpleasant silence settled upon the company. Its members were suddenly set face to face with decision and responsibility; they were crowded and jostled and made to feel strange and ill at ease, here in the dilapidated cheer of their own home, by the encroaching wisdom of other worlds. Barbara continued to sit idly in the blinding sunshine like a person passive before the issue of events, and indifferent to it. The fierce light seemed to set her apart from counsel and from tenderness, and to blare aloud her beauty.

Estella, after two or three clearings of her throat, inquired with a kind of trembling pomp: "And what do you think about it yourself, my dear?"

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Barbara rose and came slowly to the table. She stood stroking the edge of it with her hand, and finally she said: "I'll tell you what I think. I think that if I were married to Mr. Bates I shouldn't have to run out into the hall to ogle landlords to cheat them out of their rent. I think I shouldn't have to pretend to be out when the milkman comes, nor wheedle the butcher, nor have the gas turned off. I shouldn't have to walk out of a filthy mess like this"—Estella gasped—"dressed as if I were going to a beauty show, because I wanted work, and into offices where I should be looked over as if I were a horse. I think I shouldn't owe every stitch I wear and everything I put into my mouth to my sister's divorced husband. That's what I think. I think I should be looked out for and taken care of and kept away from hurt, as other women are!"

Estella began: "Well, of all the—"

"And I think," continued Barbara, her voice rising to a hysteric pitch, "that my husband would be respected everywhere, and would work for me and be true and good, and not depend for his pleasures upon a friend's getting some money, and taking him out to dinner with girls—"

"Oh! oh! Barbara!" cried Fred.

"It was such a good dinner, Barbara!" said Tony. Unquestionably, his smile was coming back.

The dogs at the same moment began to quar-

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rel over a bone, and their voices rose in ear-splitting dispute. Estella cuffed one of them, and the other carried the bone into the sitting-room, from whence issued ecstatic lickings and crunchings.

In the comparative pause Mrs. Donnelly's tearful indignation burst upon Barbara:

"We all know what you mean by that last, Barbara Floyd," she cried. "And I guess there are other people besides you in this house that are sick and tired of being poor, and the fuss there is about meals, and that have spent all their money on you, and whose fathers were rich and famous, and thought nothing of living at Delmonico's before ever you were born. If the butcher is swindled out of his meat, I don't see but you eat your share of it. If you think it's messy here, why don't you get up and clean it? Tony's scrubbed the kitchen while you've been lolling there, and you wouldn't know how to cook anything but a boiled egg and a pickle to this day if it wasn't for Tony. You're a bad, ungrateful girl, Barbara Floyd, and Tony—"

Estella pitched her voice above the voices of Mrs. Donnelly and the dogs: "Don't you try to bully my sister, Kate Donnelly, she—"

Tony struck the table sharply with his hand. "Come, Barbara," he said. "We must get the washing down now." He held the door open for her, and without looking round she went past him into the hall.

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At the head of the top flight of stairs there was a door with a heavy sliding weight, and Tony, who had run upstairs in advance, pushed it open, and with a wave of the hand, like a lavish host, welcomed Barbara to the great, shining roof. It was very wide and hot, and silent, and little airs that the sidewalk never knew drifted over its cornices. Said Tony: "To where, beyond the voices, there is peace."

Barbara stepped out fearlessly between the glare of the red roofs and the glare of the blue and golden sky. With a happy breath, she turned her unshielded face up to the light. This stretch of gleaming tin had long been their private garden, and they had known it in many kinds of weather.

"Oh, Tony!" she said, in a little soft, fluttered, laughing voice, "we needn't bother about the washing yet, need we?"

"Come," said Tony. "I've found a place where we can see the river. I found it for us this morning. Mustn't tell!"

"No," she said, and put her hand out to him, like a child. "Show me."

Behind its newer and broader substitute an old chimney rose out of the roof's western bulwark, from which it parted company a few feet above the ground in an angle of crumbling brick and mortar. Tony jumped into the niche of this angle and held down a hand to Barbara. "Step up and I'll lift you," he directed. She was be-

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side him in an instant, and found herself breast-high above the parapet, which served as an elbow rest. It was too broad to let them see straight down into the common, cluttered street, and beyond the shops and the low buildings over the way stumbled the vine-smothered huts of squatters; past a bit of leafy, broken ground the wide green of market gardens was dotted with the gold of sunflowers and the scarlet of geraniums, a single close-shorn lawn was banked with the white and the mystic blue of hydrangeas. Further yet, between the shimmer of poplars and the frown of purple hills, the river flashed and drifted.

"It's good here," said Tony.

Barbara stretched her arm across the parapet as though she stretched it into the coolness of fresh water. "There's a yacht—a white one, watch! Going down the river! Let's pretend it's going straight to sea, Tony—what fun! Across the sea."

"We're going with it, you know. Just ourselves, of course, and a telescope, maybe, and plenty of honey wrapped up in a five-pound note. All the little fishes will come and beg us for the honey, and you'll give it to them out of your hands till I shall be jealous. It isn't nice to be jealous. I wouldn't let even a little fish suffer it, if I were you, Barbara. Why, Barbara? what foolishness you talk! And you don't even hear me!"

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"I wish I could see all this from my own window," she said.

"Ah, but you can't. I had to show it to you, Barbara. It was quite easy to find, but you know you never found it." The little rosy ruffle of Barbara's sleeve lay on the rough edge of the parapet, and Tony bent his head and kissed it. "I was sure you'd like it here. Be good," he said.

The voices of some children singing ring games on a near fire-escape rose with an accent of their own natures to the two truants on the housetop. Otherwise they seemed the only living souls in a universe made up of two expanses: below them, the wide, sparkling, burning roofs, with one distant fringe of leaves and waters, and above, the radiant, hot blue, luminous and quivering, and scarcely tinged by the white clouds which slowly sailed across it and banked themselves on the horizon into palaces and temples. Toward the west, where the sun blazed in a splendor that even the eyes of lovers dared not meet, the heavens were almost white—not in pallor, but effulgence, the light incarnate. Small, lazy breezes floated through the sunshine, and brushed, fresh and sweet, against their faces.

"Barbara," said Tony, leaning forward and catching her by both wrists, "where did Regina find my ring?"

She was startled both by the suddenness of his attack and by the strength of his hold, and straining back upon his grasp she remained alert and

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silent, like a deer. He waited a moment, but she continued passionately quiet, passionately studious of his face. In the pause, the voices of the children arose with a new clearness:

“And on his breast he wore a Star,
Pointing to the East and West.”

“Barbara!”

“Hush!” she insisted. Her breath was fluttering on her lips, and her eyes shining into his:

“Go choose your East, go choose your West,
Go choose the one that you love best.”

“You kept that ring!” he said. “You kept it—because of me!” Almost as he spoke she had leaped down and away from him, and was running across the roof.

He caught up with her on the low platform of wooden slats amid the flutter of the wet linens. “Help me take these in,” she called to him. “Estella will be angry.” She was struggling with the clothespins, and their fingers met over a row of pillow-slips.

“They’re not dry yet. Listen, I—”

“There’s a breeze come up. It will dry them in a minute.” She was moving further and further away.

“Why, see, my sweet, you don’t know what you’re saying! I want to tell you—”

“Oh,” she cried, pausing oppressedly, “what does everybody tell me? That you are idle, that

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you are extravagant, that you—that you—that girls—”

“Barbara,” he said, “though they follow me in their thousands and their ten thousands, though their dead bodies strew my pathway, I will be blind to them. I love you, Barbara.”

She retreated again, making as though to reach the door, and he stood still in a sudden bitterness, with a little wound in the dignity of his love. The next instant he was startled to see her, who was so light and true of step, stumble and lose her footing on a broken slat and sink down in a heap with her hands over her face.

He ran up and bent over her without touching her. “Oh, my dear!” he asked; “what is it? Are you hurt? Or were you angry? Would you like me to go away? What is it?”

She lifted her face to his and put her arms around his neck.

“I was thinking of you,” she said.

Half an hour later, as they still sat on the platform, the roof rang with their names, and from under their damp canopy of tablecloths and towels they perceived Estella in the doorway.

“Come on!” she called. “Why, whatever’s kept you? Come on! The alimony’s come, and we’re all going to Coney Island for dinner!”

“Don’t be so noisy, Estella,” said Tony. “We’re engaged.”

“Really? Really, Barbara? Well, I’m glad

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of it. Yes, Regina," she called over her shoulder, "come up. Mama's here. Well, I'm very glad. And I'll have my white satin cleaned for her as soon as I can. How jolly we're going out to dinner! Like a party for you, Barbara."

"Splendid!" said Tony. "The alimony-baked meats did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables."

He sprang up and handed Barbara to her feet. There fell to the ground something Barbara had been showing Tony—a slender ribbon, as long as a watch-chain, and, dangling from its end, a great, clumsy, ridiculous gilt ring. Regina, who came staggering through the doorway, fell upon this latter object with a shriek of joyous recognition. "Anny Bobs gah go ring!" she cried. "Rina awn go finey aws, go finey aws, go roun an roun an roun!"

ROSEMARY FOR REMEM-
BRANCE

BY HENRY HARLAND

ROSEMARY FOR REMEMBRANCE

BY HENRY HARLAND

I

I WONDER why I dreamed last night of Zabetta. It is years since she made her brief little transit through my life, and passed out of it utterly. It is years since the very recollection of her—which for years, like an accusing spirit, had haunted me too often—like a spirit was laid. It is long enough, in all conscience, since I have even thought of her, casually, for an instant. And then, last night, after a perfectly usual London day and evening, I went to bed and dreamed of her vividly. What had happened to bring her to my mind? Or is it simply that the god of dreams is a capricious god?

The influence of my dream, at any rate—the bitter-sweet savor of it—has pursued me through my waking hours. All day long to-day Zabetta has been my phantom guest. She has walked with me in the streets; she has waited at my elbow while I wrote or talked or read. Now, at tea-time, she is present with me by my study fireside,

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in the twilight. Her voice sounds faintly, plaintively, in my ears; her eyes gaze at me sadly from a pale, reproachful face. . . . She bids me to the theatre of memory, where my youth is rehearsed before me in mimic show. There was one—no, there were two little scenes in which Zabetta played the part of leading lady.

II

I do not care to specify the year in which it happened; it happened a terrible number of years ago; it happened when I was twenty. I had passed the winter in Naples—oh, it had been a golden winter!—and now April had come, and my last Neapolitan day. To-morrow I was to take ship for Marseilles, on the way to join my mother in Paris.

It was in the afternoon; and I was climbing one of those crooked staircase alleys that scale the hillsides behind the town, the salita—is there, in Naples, a Salita Santa Margherita? I had lunched (for the last time!) at the Café d'Europe, and had then set forth upon a last haphazard ramble through the streets. It was tremulous spring weather, with blue skies, soft breezes, and a tender sun; the sort of weather that kindles perilous ardors even in the blood of middle age, and turns the blood of youth to wildfire.

Women sat combing their hair, and singing, and gossiping, before the doorways of their pink

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and yellow houses; children sprawled, and laughed, and quarreled in the dirt. Pifferari, in sheepskins and sandals, followed by prowling, gaunt-limbed dogs, droned monotonous nasal melodies from their bagpipes. Priests picked their way gingerly over the muddy cobblestones, sleek, black-a-vised priests, with exaggerated hats, like Don Basilio's in the "Barbière." Now and then one passed a fat brown monk; or a soldier; or a white-robed penitent, whose eyes glimmered uncannily from the peep-holes of the hood that hid his face; or a comely contadina, in her smart costume, with a pomegranate blossom flaming behind her ear, and red lips that curved defiantly as she met the covetous glances wildfire-and-twenty no doubt bestowed upon her—whereat, perhaps, wildfire-and-twenty halted and hesitated for an instant, debating whether to accept the challenge and turn and follow her. A flock of milk-purveying goats jangled their bells a few yards below me. Hawkers screamed their merchandise, fish, and vegetables, and early fruit—apricots, figs, green almonds. Brown-skinned, bare-legged boys shouted at long-suffering donkeys, and whacked their flanks with sticks. And everybody, more or less, importuned you for coppers. "*Mossou, mossou! Un piccolo soldo, per l'amor di Dio!*" The air was vibrant with southern human noises and dense with southern human smells—among which, here and there, wandered strangely a lost waft of perfume from

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some neighboring garden, a scent of jasmine or of orange flowers.

And then, suddenly, the salita took a turn, and broadened into a small piazza. At one hand there was a sheer terrace, dropping to tiled roofs twenty feet below; and hence one got a splendid view, over the town, of the blue bay, with its shipping, and of Capri, all rose and purple in the distance, and of Vesuvius with its silver wreath of smoke. At the other hand loomed a vast, discolored, pink-stuccoed palace, with grated windows, and a porte-cochère black as the mouth of a cavern; and the upper stories of the palace were in ruins, and out of one corner of their crumbling walls a palm-tree grew. The third side of the piazza was inevitably occupied by a church, a little pearl-gray rococo edifice, with a bell, no deeper toned than a common dinner-bell, which was now frantically ringing. About the doors of the church countless written notices were pasted, advertising indulgences; beggars clung to the steps, like monster snails; and the greasy leathern portière was constantly being drawn aside to let some one enter or come out.

III

It was here that I met Zabetta.

The heavy portière swung open, and a young girl stepped from the darkness behind it into the sunshine.

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I saw a soft face, with brown eyes; a plain black frock, with a little green nosegay stuck in its belt; and a small round scarlet hat.

A hideous old beggar woman stretched a claw toward this apparition, mumbling something. The apparition smiled, and sought in its pocket, and made the beggar woman the richer by a soldo.

I was twenty, and the April wind was magical. I thought I had never seen so beautiful a smile, a smile so radiant, so tender.

I watched the young girl as she tripped down the church steps, and crossed the piazza, coming toward me. Her smile lingered, fading slowly, slowly, from her face.

As she neared me, her eyes met mine. For a second we looked straight into each other's eyes. . . .

Oh, there was nothing bold, nothing sophisticated or immodest, in the momentary gaze she gave me. It was a natural, spontaneous gaze of perfectly frank, of perfectly innocent and impulsive interest, in exchange for mine of open admiration. But it touched the wildfire in my veins, and made it leap tumultously.

IV

Happiness often passes close to us without our suspecting it, the proverb says.

The young girl moved on; and I stood still,

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feeling dimly that something precious had passed close to me. I had not turned back to follow any of the brazenly provocative contadine. But now I could not help it. Something precious had passed within arm's reach of me. I must not let it go, without at least a semblance of pursuing it. If I waited there passive till she was out of sight, my regrets would be imbittered by the recollection that I had not even tried.

I followed her eagerly, but vaguely, in a tremor of unformulated hopes and fears. I had no definite intentions, no designs. Presently, doubtless, she would come to her journey's end—she would disappear in a house or shop—and I should have my labor for my pains. Nevertheless, I followed. What would you? She was young, she was pretty, she was neatly dressed. She had big bright brown eyes, and a slender waist and a little round scarlet hat set jauntily upon a mass of waving soft brown hair. And she walked gracefully, with delicious undulations, as if to music, lifting her skirts up from the pavement, and so discoloring the daintiest of feet, in trim buttoned boots of glazed leather, with high Italian heels. And her smile was lovely—and I was twenty—and it was April. I must not let her escape me, without at least a semblance of pursuit.

She led me down the salita that I had just ascended.

She could scarcely know that she was being

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followed, for she had not once glanced behind her.

V

At first I followed meekly, unperceived, and contented to remain so.

But little by little a desire for more aggressive measures grew within me. I said, "Why not—instead of following meekly—why not overtake and outdistance her, then turn round, and come face to face with her again? And if again her eyes should meet mine as frankly as they met them in the piazza. . . ."

The mere imagination of their doing so made my heart stop beating.

I quickened my pace. I drew nearer and nearer to her. I came abreast of her—oh, how the wildfire trembled! I pressed on for a bit, and then, true to my resolution, turned back.

Her eyes did meet mine again quite frankly. What was more, they brightened with a little light of surprise, I might almost have fancied a little light of pleasure.

If the mere imagination of the thing had made my heart stop beating, the thing itself set it to pounding, racing, uncontrollably, so that I felt all but suffocated and had to catch my breath.

She knew now that the young man she had passed in the piazza had followed her of set purpose; and she was surprised, but, seemingly, not displeased. They were wonderfully gentle, won-

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derfully winning eyes, those eyes she raised so frankly to my desirous ones; and innocent, innocent, with all the unsuspecting innocence of childhood. In years she might be seventeen, older perhaps; but there was a child's fearless unconsciousness of evil in her wide brown eyes. She had not yet been taught (or, anyhow, she clearly didn't believe) that it was dangerous and unbecoming to exchange glances with a stranger in the streets.

She was as good as smiling on me. Might I dare the utmost? Might I venture to speak to her? . . . My heart was throbbing too violently. I could not have found an articulate human word, nor a shred of voice, nor a pennyweight of self-assurance, in my body.

So, thrilling with excitement, quailing in panic, I passed her again.

I passed her, and kept on up the narrow alley for half a dozen steps, when again I turned.

She was standing where I had left her, looking after me. There was the expression of unabashed disappointment in her dark eyes now, which, in a minute, melted to an expression of appeal.

"Oh, aren't you going to speak to me, after all?" they pleaded.

Wooed by those soft monitors, I plucked up a sort of desperate courage. Hot coals burned in my cheeks, something fluttered terribly in my breast; I was literally quaking in every limb.

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My spirit was exultant, but my flesh was faint. Her eyes drew me, drew me. . . . I fancy myself awkwardly raising my hat; I hear myself accomplish a half-smothered salutation.

"Buon' giorno, Signorina."

Her face lighted up with that celestial smile of hers, and in a voice that was like ivory and white velvet, she returned, *"Buon' giorno, Signorino."*

VI

And then I don't know how long we stood together in silence.

This would never do, I recognized. I must not stand before her in silence, like a guilty schoolboy. I must feign composure. I must carry off the situation lightly like a man of the world, a man of experience. I groped anxiously in the confusion of my wits for something that might pass for an apposite remark.

At last I had a flash of inspiration. "What—what fine weather," I gasped. *"Che bel tempo!"*

"Oh, molto bello," she responded. It was like a cadenza on a flute.

"You—you are going into the town?" I questioned.

"Yes," said she.

"May I—may I have the pleasure—" I faltered.

"But yes," she consented, with an inflection

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that wondered. "What else have you spoken to me for?"

And we set off down the salita, side by side.

VII

She had exquisite little white ears, with little coral earrings, like drops of blood; and a perfect rosebud mouth, a mouth that matched her eyes for innocence and sweetness. Her scarlet hat burned in the sun, and her brown hair shook gently under it. She had plump little soft white hands.

Presently, when I had begun to feel more at my ease, I hazarded a question. "You are a republican, Signorina?"

"No," she assured me, with a puzzled elevation of the brows.

"Ah, well, then you are a cardinal," I concluded.

She gave a silvery trill of laughter, and asked, "Why must I be either a republican or a cardinal?"

"You wear a scarlet hat—a *bonnet rouge*," I explained.

At which she laughed again, crisply, merrily.

"You are French," she said.

"Oh, am I?"

"Aren't you?"

"As you wish, Signorina; but I had never thought so."

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And still again she laughed.

"You have come from church," said I.

"Già," she assented; "from confession."

"Really? And did you have a great many wickednesses to confess?"

"Oh, yes; many, many," she answered, simply.

"And now have you got a heavy penance to perform?"

"No; only twenty *aves*. And I must turn my tongue seven times in my mouth before I speak, whenever I am angry."

"Ah, then you are given to being angry? You have a bad temper?"

"Oh, dreadful, dreadful," she cried, nodding her head.

It was my turn to laugh now. "Then I must be careful not to vex you."

"Yes. But I will turn my tongue seven times before I speak, if you do," she promised.

"Are you going far?" I asked.

"I am going nowhere. I am taking a walk."

"Shall we go to the Villa Nazionale, and watch the driving?"

"Or to the Toledo, and look at the shop windows?"

"We can do both. We will begin at the Toledo, and end in the Villa."

"*Bene*," she acquiesced.

After a little silence, "I am so glad I met you," I informed her, looking into her eyes.

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Her eyes softened adorably. "I am so glad too," she said.

"You are lovely, you are sweet," I vowed, with enthusiasm.

"Oh, no!" she protested. "I am as God made me."

"You are lovely, you are sweet. I thought—when I first saw you, above there, in the piazza—when you came out of church, and gave the soldo to the old beggar woman—I thought you had the loveliest smile I had ever seen."

A beautiful blush suffused her face, and her eyes swam in a mist of pleasure. "*E vero?*" she questioned.

"*Oh, vero, vero.* That is why I followed you. You don't mind my having followed you?"

"Oh, no; I am glad."

After another interval of silence, "You are not Neapolitan?" I said. "You don't speak like a Neapolitan."

"No; I am Florentine. We live in Naples for my father's health. He is not strong. He can not endure the cold winters of the north."

I murmured something sympathetic; and she went on, "My father is a violinist. To-day he has gone to Capri, to play at a festival. He will not be back until to-morrow. So I was very lonesome."

"You have no mother?"

"My mother is dead," she said, crossing herself. In a moment she added, with a touch of pride,

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"During the season my father plays in the orchestra of the San Carlo."

"I am sure I know what your name is," said I.

"Oh? How can you know? What is it?"

"I think your name is Rosabella."

"Ah, then you are wrong. My name is Elisabetta. But in Naples everybody says Zabetta. And yours?"

"Guess."

"Oh, I can not guess. Not—not Federico?"

"Do I look as if my name were Federico?"

She surveyed me gravely for a minute, then shook her head pensively. "No; I do not think your name is Federico."

And therewith I told her my name, and made her repeat it till she could pronounce it without a struggle. It sounded very pretty, coming from her pretty lips, quite southern and romantic, with its r's tremendously enriched.

"Anyhow, I know your age," said I.

"What is it?"

"You are seventeen."

"No—ever so much older."

"Eighteen then."

"I shall be nineteen in July."

VIII

Before the brilliant shop windows of the Toledo we dallied for an hour or more, Zabetta's eyes sparkling with delight as they rested on the

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bright-hued silks, the tortoise-shell and coral, the gold and silver filagree work, that were there displayed. But when she admired some one particular object above another, and I besought her to let me buy it for her, she refused austere. "But no, no, no! It is impossible." Then we went on to the Villa, and strolled by the sea-wall, between the blue-green water and the multi-colored procession of people in carriages. And by and by Zabetta confessed that she was tired, and proposed that we should sit down on one of the benches.

"A café would be better fun," submitted her companion. And we placed ourselves at one of the out-of-door tables of the café in the garden, where, after some urging, I prevailed upon Zabetta to drink a cup of chocolate. Meanwhile, with the ready confidence of youth, we had each been desultorily autobiographical; and if our actual acquaintance was only the affair of an afternoon, I doubt if in a year we could have felt that we knew each other better.

"I must go home," Zabetta said at last.

"Oh, not yet, not yet," cried I.

"It will be dinner-time. I must go home to dinner."

"But your father is at Capri. You will have to dine alone."

"Yes."

"Then don't. Come with me instead, and dine at a restaurant."

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Her eyes glowed wistfully for an instant; but she replied, "Oh, no; I can not."

"Yes, you can. Come."

"Oh, no; impossible."

"Why?"

"Oh, because."

"Because what?"

"There is my cat. She will have nothing to eat."

"Your cook will give her something."

"My cook!" laughed Zabetta. "My cook is here before you."

"Well, you must be a kind mistress. You must give your cook an evening out."

"But my poor cat?"

"Your cat can catch a mouse."

"There are no mice in our house. She has frightened them all away."

"Then she can wait. A little fast will be good for her soul."

Zabetta laughed, and I said, "*Andiamo!*"

At the restaurant we climbed to the first floor, and they gave us a table near the window, whence we could look out over the villa to the sea beyond. The sun was sinking, and the sky was gay with rainbow tints, like mother-of-pearl.

Zabetta's face shone joyfully. "This is only the second time in my life that I have dined in a restaurant," she told me. "And the other time was very long ago, when I was quite young. And it wasn't nearly so grand a restaurant as this, either."

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"And now what would you like to eat?" I asked, picking up the bill of fare.

"May I look?" said she.

I handed her the document, and she studied it at length. I think, indeed, she read it through. In the end she appeared rather bewildered.

"Oh, there is so much. I don't know. Will you choose, please?"

I made a shift at choosing, and the sympathetic waiter flourished kitchenward with my commands.

"What is that little green nosegay you wear in your belt, Zabetta?" I inquired.

"Oh, this—it is a rosemary. Smell it," she said, breaking off a sprig and offering it to me.

"Rosemary, that's for remembrance," quoted I.

"What does that mean? What language is that?" she asked.

I tried to translate it to her. And then I taught her to say it in English. "Rrosemérri—tsat is forr rrememrrance."

"Will you write it down for me?" she requested. "It is pretty."

And I wrote it for her on the back of one of my cards.

IX

After dinner we crossed the garden again, and again stood by the sea-wall. Over us the soft spring night was like a dark sapphire. Points of red, green, and yellow fire burned from ships

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in the bay, and seemed of the same company as the stars above them. A rosy aureole in the sky, to the eastward, marked the smouldering crater of Vesuvius. Away in the Chiaja a man was singing comic songs to an accompaniment of mandolins and guitars; comic songs that sounded pathetic, as they reached us in the distance.

I asked Zabetta how she wished to finish the evening.

"I don't care," said she.

"Would you like to go to the play?"

"If you wish."

"What do *you* wish?"

"I think I should like to stay here a little longer. It is pleasant."

We leaned on the parapet, close to each other. Her face was very pale in the starlight; her eyes were infinitely deep, and dark, and tender. One of her little hands lay on the stone wall, like a white flower. I took it. It was warm and soft. She did not attempt to withdraw it. I bent over it and kissed it. I kissed it many times. Then I kissed her lips. "Zabetta, I love you, I love you," I murmured fervently. Don't imagine that I didn't mean it. It was April, and I was twenty.

"I love you, Zabetta. Dearest little Zabetta! I love you so."

"*E vero?*" she questioned, scarcely above her breath.

"Oh, *si; é vero, vero, vero,*" I asseverated. "And you? And you?"

"Yes, I love you," she whispered.

And then I could say no more. The ecstasy that filled my heart was too poignant. We stood there speechless, hand in hand, and breathed the air of heaven.

By and by Zabetta drew her bunch of rosemary from her belt, and divided it into two parts. One part she gave to me, the other she kept. "Rosemary—it is for constancy," she said. I pressed the cool herb to my face for a moment, inhaling its bitter-sweet fragrance; then I fastened it in my buttonhole. On my watch-chain I wore—what everybody in Naples used to wear—a little coral hand, a little clinched coral hand, holding a little golden dagger. I detached it now, and made Zabetta take it. "Coral—that is also for constancy," I reminded her; "and besides, it protects one from the Evil Eye."

X

At last Zabetta asked me what time it was; and when she learned that it was half-past nine, she insisted that she really must go home. "They shut the outer door of the house we live in at ten o'clock, and I have no key."

"You can ring up the porter."

"Oh, there is no porter."

"But if we had gone to the theatre?"

"I should have had to leave you in the middle of the play."

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"Ah, well," I consented; and we left the Villa and took a cab.

"Are you happy, Zabetta?" I asked her, as the cab rattled us toward our parting.

"Oh, so happy, so happy! I have never been so happy before."

"Dearest Zabetta!"

"You will love me always?"

"Always, always."

"We will see each other every day. We will see other to-morrow?"

"Oh, to-morrow!" I groaned suddenly, the actualities of life rushing all at once upon my mind.

"What is it? What of to-morrow?"

"Oh, to-morrow, to-morrow!"

"What? What?" Her voice was breathless with suspense, with alarm.

"Oh, I had forgotten. You will think I am a beast."

"What is it? For heaven's sake, tell me."

"You will think I am a beast. You will think I have deceived you. To-morrow—I can not help it—I am not my own master—I am summoned by my parents—to-morrow I am going away—I am leaving Naples."

"You are leaving Naples?"

"I am going to Paris."

"To Paris?"

"Yes."

There was a breathing-space of silence. Then,

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"*Oh, Dio!*" sobbed Zabetta; and she began to cry as if her heart would break.

I seized her hands; I drew her to me. I tried to comfort her. But she only cried and cried and cried.

"Zabetta . . . Zabetta. . . . Don't cry. . . . Forgive me. . . . Oh, don't cry like that."

"*Oh, Dio! Oh, caro Dio!*" she sobbed.

"Zabetta—listen to me," I began. "I have something to say to you. . . ."

"Cosa?" she asked faintly.

"Zabetta—do you really love me?"

"*Oh, tanto, tanto!*"

"Then listen, Zabetta. If you really love me—come with me."

"Come with you. How?"

"Come with me to Paris."

"To Paris?"

"Yes, to-morrow."

There was another instant of silence, and then again Zabetta began to cry.

"Will you? Will you? Will you come with me to Paris?" I implored her.

"Oh, I would, I would. But I can't. I can't."

"Why not?"

"Oh, I can't."

"Why? Why can't you?"

"Oh, my father—I can not leave my father."

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"Your father? But—if you love me—"

"He is old. He is ill. He has no one but me. I can not leave him."

"Zabetta!"

"No, no. I can not leave him. *Oh, Dio mio!*"

"But Zabetta—"

"No. It would be a sin. Oh, the worst of sins. He is old and ill. I can not leave him. Don't ask me. It would be dreadful."

"But then? Then what? What shall we do?"

"Oh, I don't know. I wish I were dead."

The cab came to a standstill, and Zabetta said, "Here we are." I helped her to descend. We were before a dark porte-cochère, in some dark back street, high up the hillside.

"*Addio*," said Zabetta, holding out her hand.

"You won't come with me?"

"I can't. I can't. *Addio*."

"Oh, Zabetta! Do you— Oh, say, say that you forgive me."

"Yes. *Addio*."

"And, Zabetta, you—you have my address. It is on the card I gave you. If you ever need anything—if you are ever in trouble of any kind—remember you have my address—you will write to me."

"Yes. *Addio*."

"*Addio*."

She stood for a second, looking up at me from great brimming eyes, and then she turned away

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and vanished in the darkness of the portecochère. I got into the cab, and was driven to my hotel.

XI

And here, one might have supposed was an end of the episode; but no.

I went to Paris, I went to New York, I returned to Paris, I came on to London; and in this journeying more than a year was lost. In the beginning I had suffered as much as you could wish me in the way of contrition, in the way of regret too. I blamed myself and pitied myself with almost equal fervor. I had trifled with a gentle human heart; I had been compelled to let a priceless human treasure slip from my possession. But—I was twenty. And there were other girls in the world. And a year is a long time, when we are twenty. Little by little the image of Zabetta faded, faded. By the year's end, I am afraid it had become very pale indeed. . . .

It was late June, and I was in London, when the post brought me a letter. The letter bore an Italian stamp, and had originally been directed to my old address in Paris. Thence (as the numerous redirections on the big square foreign envelope attested) it had been forwarded to New York; thence back again to Paris; and thence finally to London.

The letter was written in the neatest of tiny

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copperplate; and this is a translation of what it said:

"DEAR FRIEND—My poor father died last month in the German Hospital, after an illness of twenty-one days. Pray for his soul.

"I am now alone and free, and if you still wish it, can come to you. It was impossible for me to come when you asked me; but you have not ceased to be my constant thought. I keep your coral hand.—Your ever faithful.
ZABETTA COLLALUCE."

Inclosed in the letter there was a sprig of some dried, bitter-sweet smelling herb; and, in pencil, below the signature—laboriously traced, as I could guess, from what I had written for her on my visiting-card—the English phrase: "Rosemary—that's for remembrance."

The letter was dated early in May, which made it six weeks old.

What could I do? What answer could I send?

Of course, you know what I did do. I procrastinated and vacillated, and ended by sending no answer at all. I could not write and say, "Yes, come to me." But how could I write and say, "No, do not come"? Besides, would she not have given up hoping for an answer by this time? It was six weeks since she had written. I tried to think that the worst was over.

But my remorse took a new and a longer and a stronger lease of life. A vision of Zabetta, pale, with anxious eyes, standing at her window, waiting, waiting for a word that never came—for months I could not chase it from my conscience; it was years before it altogether ceased its accusing visits.

XII

And then, last night, after a perfectly usual London day and evening, I went to bed and dreamed of her vividly; and all day long to-day the fragrance of my dream has clung about me—a bitter-sweet fragrance, like that of rosemary itself. Where is Zabetta now? What is her life? How have the years treated her? . . . In my dream she was still eighteen. In reality—it is melancholy to think how far from eighteen she has had leisure, since that April afternoon, to drift.

Youth faces forward, impatient of the present, panting to anticipate the future. But we who have crossed a certain sad meridian, we turn our gaze backward, and tell the relentless gods what we would sacrifice to recover a little of the past, one of those shining days when to us also it was given to sojourn among the Fortunate Islands. *Ah, si jeunesse savait! . . .*

SUCH AS WALK IN
DARKNESS

BY SAMUEL HOPKINS ADAMS

SUCH AS WALK IN DARKNESS

BY SAMUEL HOPKINS ADAMS

IN ALL the trade of the city you might not find such another quaint business firm as Solomon John and Billy Wigg. The senior partner was a gentle old giant; the junior a brisk and shaggy little dog. It was Solomon John's business to stand on a roaring corner and sell papers; it was Billy Wigg's business to take care of him while he did it, for he was blind. It was our business—Dr. Harvey's and mine—to pay for our papers and pass on, but we seldom strictly minded it. Instead, we would stop to talk to Solomon John, to the detriment of trade, and to be patronized by Billy Wigg, who was much puffed up with self-importance, conceiving himself to be principal owner of the earth and sole proprietor of Solomon John. In the half of which he was correct.

I was very fond of Billy Wigg, despite his airs of superiority. Harvey preferred old Solomon; but this was a semi-professional interest, for my medical friend had contracted the pamphlet habit, which he indulged before scientific bodies

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made up of gentlemen with weak eyes who knew more about ophthalmology than can be found in many fat tomes. Solomon John was a remarkable case of something quite unpronounceable, and Harvey used to gaze into his eyes with rapt intensity, while Billy Wigg fidgeted and struggled against the temptation to gnaw such portions of him as were within reach; for Billy Wigg didn't understand, and what he didn't understand he disapproved of on principle. In the light of subsequent events I believe Billy's uneasiness to have been an instance of animal prevision.

To see Billy Wigg conduct his master across that mill-race of traffic that swirled between curb and curb, as he did every morning in time for business, was an artistic pleasure. Something more than a mere pilot was the dog; rather the rudder to whose accurate direction old Solomon responded with precise and prompt fidelity. A tug of the trouser leg from behind would bring the ancient newsboy to a halt. A gentle jerk forward would start him again, and in obedience to a steady pull to one side or the other he would trustingly suffer himself to be conducted around a checked wagon or a halted cable car. All the time Billy Wigg would keep up a running conversation made up of admonition, warning, and encouragement.

"Come on, now"—in a series of sharp yaps as they started from the curb. "Push right ahead.

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Hold hard. That's all right; it's by. Hurry now. Hurry, I said. *Will* you do as I tell you?" Then, to a too pressing cabby, in an angry bark, "What's the matter with you, anyway? Trying to run folks down? Hey? Well"—apologetically, in response to a jerk on his string—"these fool drivers do stir me up. Wait a bit. Now for it. And here we are."

How many thousand times dog and man had made the trip in safety before the dire day of the accident not even Solomon John can reckon. Harvey and I had started downtown early, while our pair of paper-vending friends chanced to be a little late. As we reached the corner they were already half-way across the street, and Billy Wigg, with all the strength of terror, was striving to haul Solomon John backward.

"What's the matter with Billy?" said Harvey.

A second later the question was answered, as there plunged into view from behind a car the galloping horse of a derelict delivery wagon.

"Good heavens! Look at the old man," I cried, and in the same breath, "Look at the dog," gasped Harvey.

With one mighty jerk Billy Wigg had torn the leash from his master's hand. Bereft of his sole guidance in the thunder and rush of traffic, the blind man stretched out piteous hands, warding the death he could not see.

"Billy," he quavered, "where are you, Billy? Come back to me, Billy-dog."

For once Billy Wigg was deaf to his master's voice. He was obeying a more imperious call, that unfathomed nobility of dog-nature that responds so swiftly to the summons. He was casting his own life in the balance to save another's. Straight at the horse's throat he launched himself, a forlorn hope. It was a very big horse, and Billy was a very little dog. The up-stroke of the knee caught him full; he was flung, whirling, fell almost under the wheels of a cab, rolled into the gutter, and lay there quiet. The horse had swerved a little, not quite enough. There was a scream, and the blind man went down from the glancing impact of the shoulder. Harvey and I were beside him almost as soon as the cross-walk policeman. The three of us carried him to the sidewalk.

"No need to call an ambulance, officer," said Harvey. "I'm a physician and the man is a friend of mine."

"Bedad, thin, the dawg is a frind of mine," said the big fellow. "Couldn't ye take him along too, sir?"

"Well — rather," said Harvey heartily. "Where is he?" He turned to look for the dog.

Billy Wigg came crawling toward us. Never tell me that dogs have no souls. The eyes in Billy's shaggy little face yearned with a more than human passion of anxiety and love, as, gasping with pain—for he had been cruelly shaken—he dragged himself to his partner's

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face. At the touch of the warm, eager tongue, Solomon John's eyes opened. He stretched out his hand and buried it in the heavy fur.

"Hello, Billy," he said weakly. "I was afraid you were hurt. Are you all right, old boy?" And Billy, burrowing a wet nose in Solomon John's neck, wept for joy with loud whines.

Some rapid and expert wire-pulling on the part of Harvey landed our pair of friends in a private hospital, where Solomon John proved a most grateful and gentle patient, and Billy Wigg a most tumultuous one until arrangement was made for the firm to occupy one and the same cot. Then he became tractable, even enduring the indignity of a flannel jacket and splints with a sort of humorous tolerance. Every day Harvey came and gazed soulfully into Solomon John's glazed eyes—which is a curious form of treatment for broken collar-bone, not sanctioned by any of the authorities who have written on the subject. It soon became evident that Harvey didn't care anything about the rib; he had other designs. On a day he came to the point.

"Solomon John, would you like to have your sight back?"

The blind man sat up in his cot and pressed his hands to his head.

"Do you mean it, sir?" he gasped. "You—you wouldn't go to fool an old man."

"Will you let me operate on you to-morrow?"

"Anything you think best, sir. I don't quite

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seem to take it all in yet, sir—not the whole sense of it. But if it does come out right,” added Solomon John in the simplicity of his soul, “won’t Billy Wigg be surprised and tickled!”

Billy Wigg raged mightily and rent the garments of his best friends, because he was shut out during the operation. When he was admitted after it was over he howled tumultuously, because Solomon John was racked with ether sickness, which he mistook for the throes of approaching dissolution. Followed then weeks during which Solomon John wore a white bandage, in place of the old green eye-shade, and at frequent intervals sang a solemn but joyous chant which Billy Wigg accompanied with impatient yelps, because he couldn’t make out what it meant.

“We’re going to have our sight again,
Billy Wigg, Billy Wigg:
We’re going to see the world again,
Billy, my dog.”

It was a long, nerve-trying wait, but the day finally came when the white bandages were removed. After the first gasp of rapture, Solomon John looked about him eagerly.

“Let me see my dog,” he said. “Billy, is this you?” as the junior partner looked with anxious and puzzled eyes into his face. “Well, you’re certainly a mighty handsome doggy, old boy.” (Billy Wigg was homelier than a stack of hay in January, but the eyes that looked on him were as those of a mother when she first sees her babe.)

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Unhappiness was the portion of Billy in the days that followed. A partner who wandered about unchaperoned and eluded obstacles without relying on his sense of touch was quite beyond his comprehension. So he sulked consistently until the time came for leaving the hospital. Then he chirked up a bit, thinking, presumably, that Solomon John would resume his old habit of blind reliance upon him when once the doors had closed behind them. Poor Billy!

It was three weeks after the operation that they left, Solomon John being discharged as cured. Harvey exulted. He said it was a great operation and proved things. I thought, myself, it was a mean trick on Billy Wigg. My unprofessional diagnosis was that he was on the road to becoming a chronic melancholiac.

The partners called on Harvey soon after the departure from the hospital. They were a study in psychological antithesis; Solomon John bubbling over with boyish happiness, Billy Wigg aged with the weight of woe he was carrying. The old man was touchingly grateful, but his ally surreptitiously essayed to bite a piece out of Harvey's leg when his back was turned. He nursed an unavenged wrong.

Months passed before we saw the pair again. We returned from our European vacation confident of finding them on the same old corner, and sure enough, there they were. But as we approached Harvey seized me by the arm.

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"Good heavens! Bob! Look at the old man!"

"What's wrong with him?" said I. "He looks just the same as he used to."

"Just the same as he used to," echoed Harvey bitterly. "Eye-shade and all. All my work gone for nothing. Poor old boy!"

"Billy Wigg's all right, anyway," said I.

"Think so?" said Harvey. "It strikes me that it isn't exactly welcome that he's trying to express." Then, in a louder voice to Solomon John, "How did it happen, old Sol?"

At the sound of his voice Solomon John whirled about and started to thrust up his shade, as if involuntarily. Then he held out tremulous hands, crying:

"What! Is that you, Dr. Harvey? God bless you, sir! And is Mr. Roberts with you? Well, well, but this does me good. You're a sight for sore eyes!"

"Not for yours, Solomon John."

"And why not, then? Whist! I forgot," he broke off scaredly, jerking his head toward Billy Wigg, who held us all under jealous scrutiny. "Wait a breath."

Thrusting his hand into his pocket, he whipped it out suddenly. A flight of coins scattered and twinkled and rolled diversely on the sidewalk. "Dear, dear!" cried the old man cunningly. "The old fool that I am! I'll never be rich this way. Pick them up, Billy-boy."

Billy hated it, for picking small coins from a

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smooth pavement with lip and tooth is no easy job; hated worse leaving his partner to two such unscrupulous characters as he well knew us to be. But he knew his business, and set about it with all his energies.

"Whisper now," said the senior partner as Billy swore under his breath at a slithery and elusive dime. "I've as fine a pair of eyes as you'd want for star-gazing at noonday."

"Then what on earth—"

"She-h-h! Soft and easy! The beast's cocking his little ear this way. Sure 'twas all on his account, sirs."

"On Billy's account?" we both exclaimed in a breath.

"You didn't think I'd be faking it?" he asked reproachfully.

We didn't; and we said so. But we required further enlightenment.

"All on account of Billy Wigg there, sirs. The eyesight was a million blessings to me, but 'twas death to poor Billy. Not a pleasure in life would he take after we left the hospital. When I'd walk free and easy along the streets that looked so pretty to my old eyes, the dog'd be crazy with fear that some harm would come to me through him not leading me. At the last he just laid down and set out to die. He'd not sleep, he'd not eat; and the eyes of him when he'd look at me were fit to make a man weep. I sent for a dog doctor—you being away, sir," put in

Solomon John in polite parenthesis to my friend. "He says, 'The dog's dying of a broken heart. I've seen it before,' he says. 'What'll I do?' says I. 'He'll not be content till you are as you were before,' says the dog doctor. It was a minute before I sensed what he meant. Then my heart got thick and sick inside me. 'Blind?' I says. 'Is that what you mean?' 'You old fool,' says the dog doctor, 'can't you do a bit of play-acting? You've had enough practice in the part,'" he says.

"Over I went and got my stick and put on the old shade that I hadn't ever thought to use again, thanks to you, sir, and tap-tapped across the floor to Billy Wigg. 'Come on, Billy,' says I; 'I want you to take me out for a walk.' Billy jumped up with a kind of choky bark, and I hugged Billy and Billy hugged me, and—we've been doing business on the corner ever since."

There was a long pause. Harvey's expression was queer. I felt a little queer myself. It was a queer story, you know. Finally I asked the old man if business was good.

"Nicely, sir, thank you," said Solomon John; "but I want to ask you, Is it a dishonesty, think you, for me to be wearing my shade like a blind man, and me able to see a flea on the end of Billy Wigg's tail the length of the block away? The Lord's been mighty good to me, sir—you and the Lord—giving me back my sight," said Solomon John simply, turning to Harvey, "and I

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wouldn't want to do anything that wasn't just square."

"I wouldn't let it weigh on my mind," said Harvey.

"I'd been thinking of a bit of a sign," proceeded Solomon John. "A friend of mine printed it out for me, but the idea's my own."

After some fumbling under his coat he produced a placard artfully designed in large and flourishy letters. This was the order of it:

I Am NOT Blind but The Dog Thinks I Am.
--

Billy Wigg seemed pleased because Harvey kicked me. No doubt he would have been equally pleased if I had kicked Harvey. But it happened to be I who laughed. Harvey covered it up by soberly telling Solomon John that the sign was sure to be a grand success.

It was a grand success; quite stupendous, in fact. Old Sol did a business on the strength of it that would have made his eyes pop out if he hadn't kept them tight shut out of respect to Billy's prejudices. Reporters found his simplicity and naïve honesty a mine of "good stuff," and the picture of the firm was in all the papers. Billy Wigg began to suffer from swelled head; became haughty, not to say snobbish. But the

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fierce light of publicity wore upon the simple soul of Solomon John. He discarded the extraordinary placard, and was glad when he faded away from fame. Billy wasn't. He liked notoriety as well as authority.

Billy continued to exercise his authority. But even so meek a soul as that of Solomon John has limits of endurance beyond which it is not well to press. Only the other day it was that the old man said to Harvey, while Billy Wigg was otherwise engaged:

"It's as bad as being a henpecked husband, sir. Last night, as I was quietly stepping out the window to take a mug of ale with some friends, Billy wakes up, and the fuss he makes rouses the neighborhood. Sure, he wouldn't hark to my going at all. You can see his teeth marks on my shin this minute, sir. Could you give me something harmless to put in his food that'd make him sleep the sounder?"

Harvey said he'd think about it. He wasn't obliged to. Less than a week later he got a note in the mail:

"DEAR SIR—I could not stand it any longer. I have Absconded to Buffalo to Take a Rest. Please be Good to Billy Wigg. I inclose his Board and Lodging any place you Put him. He is a good Dog, but too Bossy. I am Going to See Things till my Eyes get Tired. I will come Back in Future.

"Yrs respectfully,

"SOLOMON J. BOLES.

"P. S.—I know you will Treat Billy Good."

The inclosure was a twenty-dollar bill. It was the price of freedom, and cheap at the price.

OUT OF THE STORM

BY MULLOY FINNEGAN

OUT OF THE STORM

BY MULLOY FINNEGAN

CHUGGINS, Nevada, was having one of its three-day winds. Rain started in, too, and blew with everything else. Tin cans went tumbling over one another down Golden Street, gathering up beer-bottles as they went along, the swishing rain driving everything loose before it.

At the upper end of Golden Street—and then back up the slope a bit—in her little dry-goods box of a house, made from several boxes, dry-goods and otherwise, Phil Martin's wife lay listening to the clattering procession, and wondering where all the tin cans came from. The little house itself rocked like a ship at sea, and, but for the friendly shoulder of the hill it leaned against, might have joined in the mad procession, as some of its scattered neighbors, less fortunately anchored, occasionally did.

Phil Martin's wife raised herself on an elbow and tried to look out through the rain-splashed window beside her bed. A little dog came from somewhere and tried to look out, too.

"No, Monk," she said. "He is not coming yet!"

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She shaded her eyes with her hand, to keep out the bleary streaks of light that reached up at her, from down-town, through the wet darkness—the better to see in another direction, at right angles with them; only darting back when a sudden flash of lightning obliterated them entirely, illuminating the surrounding mountains and making them quiver in the bellowing thunder that followed.

All at once she spied a tiny light—like a far-away star. It was what she was looking for. She knew it came from the lantern carried by her husband on his way home from the Bonnie Bell mine, where he was working on the night shift.

“Here he comes now!” she said, springing from the bed and stepping into the felt slippers beside it.

“Row, row, row!” said the little dog, who was still very young, scratching at the door to be let out to meet his master.

“Not yet,” said his mistress, shaking her head and its long brown braid, and throwing a warm wrapper over her night-dress. “He’s not near enough yet.”

Then she turned up the wick in the coal-oil lamp, and busied herself making things comfortable.

She put some wood and paper in the sheet-iron stove, and soon had a lively fire, which roared with the wind in the polished stovepipe that ran

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straight up through the low ceiling. When she had the coffee-pot on, she drew up the one comfortable armchair. She placed across it some flannel pajamas, and, in front of it, a pair of warm slippers.

"Let's see," she said, trying to think of something else. "He'll be pretty hungry when he comes in out of that storm. Let's cook him some ham and eggs."

She talked to the dog—a little black fellow with a white cross on his chest.

He had retreated from the door, at her bidding, and was playing with one of the slippers before the fire, never so intent on the pastime that his ears did not prick at attention for a sound of his master's approaching footstep.

"Gr-r-r! Woof!"

He dropped the slipper and bounded for the door, but his mistress finished breaking the eggs in a bowl and covering them over with a saucer before she answered his imperative demand to open it.

Hardly had she slipped the bolt than the door flew back against her, and a man's form came in with it out of the night and the storm.

"Down, Monk!" she commanded.

The dog was making great leaps at the stranger, who, although he slammed the door quickly behind him, in the face of the resisting wind and rain, brought plenty of them in with him.

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"He'll not bite you," she said to the half-drowned man. "Just wants to make friends."

It had not occurred to her to be afraid till she saw the stranger lock the door and put the key in his pocket. Then he shot the bolt.

"Who else is here?" he demanded in a husky voice, taking in at a glance the one room of the cabin.

The eyes he turned back on her through the drippings that trickled from his pulled-down slouch-hat made her hesitate, as she answered:

"Nobody—not now."

"Not *now*?" he repeated, as if to get her meaning. "Oh!" he exclaimed, as his gaze lighted on the coffee-pot and egg-shells, and, taking in the slippers and pajamas, traveled to the rumpled bed. "You mean somebody *was* here and has just gone to work. I know they change shifts over at the Bonnie Bell about this time. Is that it?"

"Yes," she answered, falling into the lie intuitively.

Past him, through the little window, she could see the light coming down the side of the mountain. It was still very small. Of course, it had the storm to fight—but oh, why didn't it hurry?

"Then," the man was saying, "we're not apt to be disturbed for some eight hours? Am I right?"

And again she lied:

"Yes."

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He removed his hat and shook the drippings into the wood-box; then, unbuttoning his khaki coat, threw back its collar and turned down the collar of the double-breasted blue flannel shirt underneath, the flying moisture sizzling against the tiny stove.

"Then, for mercy's sake, fix me up something to eat!" he said. "I'm starved!"

He dropped into the chair before the fire, and let his head fall between his hands, as if able to hold up no longer.

As she pushed back some sewing things on the table to make room for the dishes, she watched the nervous fingers digging in the thick, unkempt hair. They belonged to the hands of a working man, but one who had been estranged from soap and water for some time, excepting what the rain furnished. What she could see of the face told the same story, and needed shaving, besides. The steam-emitting khaki clothes looked as if he slept in them.

He dragged a chair to the table and started eating before she was ready for him—munching bread till she got the ham and eggs to his plate, and then hurrying them down his throat, with great swallows of coffee, which he drew, with a swishing sound, through his mustache.

"I don't want to harm you, ma'am," he said, gulping down a final chunk of bread and slipping back his chair; "but I want to get a couple of hours' sleep before daylight. All you've got to

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do is keep quiet. It wouldn't do you any good hollering, anyhow, in this storm—even if your neighbors weren't so far away; and whoever comes in that door, I'll blow his brains out!"

He reached around to his hip-pocket and drew from it a six-shooter. The frightened woman knew he wasn't only talking.

She watched him stagger toward the bed she had so recently vacated and tumble into it, wet clothing, boots, and all.

"Better turn down the light," he drowsily ordered, adjusting his hand over the gun on the coverlet. "Same as you had it before it attracted me this way. It might attract somebody else. Better turn it out altogether."

Hardly done, before his snores vied with the outside elements.

Noiselessly Phil Martin's wife tiptoed to the door and drew back the bolt; but the lock was locked for keeps.

Then she turned to the little window. It was in a side wall of the cabin, at right angles with the one containing the door. If it was large enough to admit her, she would have to climb over the snoring man to get to it; and even then she would be obliged to lift the sash and break through the screen tacked on from the outside.

One of the muddy yellow boots slipping to the floor startled her, but the snores didn't miss a beat.

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The firelight revealed the figure on the bed, lying on its back, the slipped boot dragging on the floor. Should he sit up suddenly, he would be facing the door, and she could well believe that he would keep his word about the gun.

Across him she could see the light coming down the mountain. How it was growing! Her lips moved in prayer as she watched it—a desperate prayer that its bearer might stumble and turn an ankle, or even break an arm. It would be better than having his brains blown out in his own doorway!

Should she risk her life and scream when he got nearer? Willingly, willingly; but that would only hurry him on, not drive him back. Then she prayed again.

And all this time the light was getting nearer and larger!

It could not have been more than a block away when something brought her gaze back to her surroundings. The room about her was quite dark. The fire had almost died out!

A new terror seized her. She groped her way to the wood-box, and stooped to get some fuel to replenish the dying fire, when she felt the little dog settling himself on her skirts.

She put out a hand to pat him, thankful for his nearness, but it stopped in the middle of the caress as a drop of moisture fell on the back of it.

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Even in the dark the natural instinct was to look up to see where the water came from. A sudden flash of lightning revealed a crescent-shaped opening, like a new moon—a thin slice of the stovepipe hole.

Then it was dark again. On the heels of the thunder-clap that followed, she could hear the outside chimney, which some merciful wind had blown off, go clattering over the roof and off it, to join the other tin things rolling down Golden Street.

With a sudden inspiration she snatched the dog to her, and hunted around in the wood-box for the empty egg-crate. She remembered throwing it there.

Then she remembered her sewing-basket on the table, and blindly made her way to it, knocking over the lately used cup in its saucer when she got there.

Frightened, she paused for developments; but the noise it made was such a slight one compared to the surrounding bedlam that it caused no perceptible difference in the snores issuing from the bed.

The sewing-basket located, she fingered around in it for a piece of blue tailor's chalk which she always kept there. When she found it, she unlocked the cardboard strips of the egg-crate and selected one. Then she seated herself at the table. While the dog, cuddled in her left arm, affectionately licked her neck where it rose out of the

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wrapper, with her right hand she blindly traced what ought to read:

Don't come unarmed. Bring help.

She folded the strip of cardboard and refolded it, and, wrapping the little bunch in her pocket-handkerchief, tied it securely to Monk's leather collar.

They both trembled as she climbed up on the chair, feeling along the still warm stovepipe till she came to the crescent-shaped opening.

With a handful of her wrapper she shoved the pipe further aside. Taking the shivering dog in her two hands, she reached up and tried to force him through the enlarged stovepipe hole. His head once out, he slipped from her hands so quickly that she almost lost her balance.

She knew that Monk had seen his master and recognized him.

Once out, it was an easy thing for him to run along the roof and down the side of the hill into which it was built.

When she could recover her breath, she pushed the pipe back in place and descended to firmer footing.

The light was so near that she almost screamed! She held her breath when she saw it approach the ground, as if its bearer was stooping—to pat the dog, for instance. Then her heart came up in her throat and stuck there while she waited for it to move on again.

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When it did, it took another direction. It went down-town.

"Thank God!" she breathed.

She began to feel cold. She drew her wrapper about her and huddled, with her feet tucked up under her, in the big armchair before the dead fire.

Once the man on the bed stirred and mumbled something incoherent, but his words died away in gurgles as his big snore again filled the dark room.

She waited—she knew not for what. Even if the man woke, he would never guess what she had done. He might think she had fallen asleep and let the fire die out. Even if he knew that the wind blew the chimney off and the rain put it out, it would make no difference.

She got up and looked across him again, but all that she could see was the streaky light from down-town. If there was anything on its way to her, it was lost in those streaks.

Returning to the chair, a drowsiness came over her. She wasn't anxious about Phil any more. She was even wishing that the man on the bed would finish his sleep and go. She was so tired—and the cabin wasn't a cabin any more—it was a boat. She liked the rocking—and the splashing of the waves on its sides—

A sudden crash brought her to, as the door burst in and a flash of light revealed the gun in the hand of the man on the bed. She uttered a

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piercing scream which almost drowned the report that followed!

But it came through the little window; and the extended arm dropped helpless while the gun clattered to the floor.

Men came from everywhere.

"So it's you, Buck Hennessy, is it?" said Casey, the sheriff; snapping the bracelets on the wounded man's wrists. "Sorry we couldn't let you finish your sleep, but they want you right bad over at Goldfield for holding up Jim Breen, paymaster of the Gold Bar, and putting him out of business. Maybe you'll be able to tell them what you did with the two sacks of currency you got away with—you see, the miners would like their pay. Been hiding around in our nice hills here about three days now, haven't you, and thought you'd get over to Beatty and catch that train in the morning? Not this trip, Buck! Just walk on ahead of me. Make room for him, gentlemen!"

When the cabin was cleared of the crowd, made up mostly of men from the Seventy-seven saloon, where Phil Martin found them killing the lonely hours of the wet night with poker, roulette, faro, craps, and a few other innocent amusements, the big oilskin-coated miner put his arms around his little wife and let her cry on his shoulder.

"Poor little girlie!" he crooned, patting the heaving form in the soot-streaked wrapper. "You've had a night of it!"

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As he tried to tell her about the five hundred dollars' reward that was coming to her, the little dog was bouncing around them, yelping and barking for attention.

"You, too, Monk," he said, picking him up from the floor and holding the little black bundle tenderly against his face. "You'll get a nice gold collar!"

